

THE  
CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

---

OCTOBER 1911.

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*THE CASE OF RICHARD MEYNELL.<sup>1</sup>*

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CHAPTER XIX.

It was in the week before Christmas that Professor Veitch—the same Professor who had been one of the Bishop's commission of inquiry in Richard Meynell's case—knocked one afternoon at Canon France's door to ask for a cup of tea. He had come down to give a lecture to the Church Club which had been recently started in Markborough in opposition to the Reformers' Club; but his acceptance of the invitation had been a good deal determined by his very keen desire to probe the later extraordinary developments of the Meynell affair on the spot.

France was in his low-ceiled study, occupied as usual with documents of various kinds; most of them mediæval deeds and charters which he was calendaring for the Cathedral Library. His table and the floor were littered by them; a stack of the Rolls publications was on his right hand; a Dugdale's 'Monasticon' lay open at a little distance; and curled upon a newspaper beside it lay a grey kitten. The kitten had that morning upset an inkstand over three sheets of the Canon's laborious handwriting. At the time, he had indeed dropped her angrily by the scruff of the neck into a wastepaper basket to repent of her sins; but here she was again, and the Canon had patiently rewritten the sheets.

There were not many softnesses in the Canon's life. The kitten was one; of the other perhaps only his sister, nearly as old as himself, who lived with him, was aware. Twenty years

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VOL. XXXI—NO. 184. N.S.

before—just after his appointment to the Canonry—he had married a young and, in the opinion of his family, flighty wife, who had lived a year and then died. She had passed like a spring flower; and after a year or two all that was remembered about her was that she had chosen the drawing-room paper, which was rather garishly pink like her own cheeks. In the course of time the paper had become so discoloured and patchy that Miss France was ashamed of it. For years her brother turned a deaf ear to her remarks on the subject. At last he allowed her to re-paper the room. But she presently discovered that close to the seat he generally occupied in the drawing-room of an evening there was a large hole in the new paper made by the rubbing and scraping of the Canon's fingers as he sat at tea. Through it the original pink reappeared. More than once Miss France caught her brother looking contentedly at his work of mischief. But she dared not speak of it to him, nor do anything to repair the damage.

As France perceived the identity of the visitor whom his old manservant was showing into the study, a slight shade of annoyance passed over his face. But he received the Professor civilly, cleared a chair of books in order that he might sit down, and gave a vigorous poke to the fire.

The Professor did not wish to appear too inquisitive on the subject of Meynell, and he therefore dallied a little with matters of biblical criticism. France, however, took no interest whatever in them; and even an adroit description of a paper recently read by the speaker himself at an Oxford meeting failed to kindle a spark. Veitch found himself driven upon the real object of his visit.

He desired to know—understanding that the Canon was an old friend of Henry Barron—where the Meynell affair exactly was.

'Am I an old friend of Henry Barron?' said France slowly.

'He says you are,' laughed the Professor. 'I happened to go up to town in the same carriage with him a fortnight ago.'

'He comes here a good deal—but he never takes my advice,' said France.

The Professor inquired what the advice had been.

'To let it alone!' France looked round suddenly at his companion. 'I have come to the conclusion'—he added drily—'that Barron is not a person of delicacy.'

The Professor, rather taken aback, argued on Barron's behalf. Would it have been seemly or right for a man—a Churchman of Barron's prominence—to keep such a thing to himself at such a critical moment? Surely it had an important bearing on the controversy.

'I see none,' said France, a spark of impatience in the small black eyes that shone so vividly above his large hanging cheeks. 'Meynell says the story is untrue.'

'Ah! but let him prove it!' cried the Professor, his young-old face flushing. 'He has made a wanton attack upon the Church; he cannot possibly expect any quarter from us. We are not in the least bound to hold him immaculate—quite the contrary. Men of that impulsive undisciplined type are, as we all know, very susceptible to women.'

France faced round upon his companion in a slow contemptuous wonder.

'I see you take your views from the anonymous letters?'

The Professor laughed awkwardly.

'Not necessarily. I understand Barron has direct evidence. Anyway, let Meynell take the usual steps. If he takes them successfully, we shall all rejoice. But his character has been made, so to speak, one of the pieces in the game. We are really not obliged to accept it at his own valuation.'

'I think you will have to accept it,' said France.

There was a pause. The Professor wondered secretly whether France too was beginning to be tarred with the Modernist brush. No!—impossible. For that the Canon was either too indolent or too busy.

At last he said—

'Seriously:—I should like to know what you really think.'

'It is of no importance what I think. But what suggests itself of course is that there is some truth in the story, but that Meynell is not the hero. And he doesn't see his way to clear himself by dishing other people.'

'I see.' The obstinacy in the smooth voice rasped France. 'If so, most unlucky for him! But then let him resign his living, and go quietly into obscurity. He owes it to his own side. For them the whole thing is disaster. He *must* either clear himself or go.'

'Oh, give him a little time,' said France sharply. 'Give him a little time.' Then, with a change of tone—'The

anonymous letters of course are the really interesting things in the case. Perhaps you have a theory about them?'

The Professor shrugged his shoulders.

'None whatever. I have seen three—including that published in the "Post." I understand about twenty have now been traced; and that they grow increasingly dramatic and detailed. Evidently some clever fellow—who knows a great deal—with a grudge against Meynell?'

'Ye—es—' said France, with hesitation.

'You suspect somebody?'

'Not at all. It is a black business.'

Then with one large and powerful hand, France restrained the kitten, who was for deserting his knee, and with the other he drew towards him the folio volume on which he had been engaged when the Professor came in.

Veitch took the hint, said a rather frosty good-bye and departed.

'A popinjay!' was France's irritable reflection, when he was left alone to think with annoyance of the Professor's curly hair, of his elegant serge suit, and the gem from Knossos that he wore on the little finger of his left hand. Then he took up a large pipe which lay beside his books, filled it, and hung meditatively over the fire. He was angry with Veitch, and disgusted with himself.

'Why haven't I given Meynell a helping hand? Why did I let Barron come here and talk to me for an hour without telling him what I really thought of him?'

He fell for some minutes into an abyss of thought—thought which seemed to range not so much over the circumstances connected with Meynell, as over the whole of his own past.

But he emerged from it with a long shake of the head.

'My habits are my habits!' he said to himself with a kind of bitter decision, and laying down his pipe he went back to his papers.

Almost at the same moment the Bishop was interviewing Henry Barron in the little book-lined room beyond the main library, which he kept for the business he most disliked. He never put the distinction into words; but when any member of his clergy was invited to step into the further room, the person so invited felt depressed.



Barron's substantial presence seemed to fill the little study, as, very much on his defence, he sat *tête-à-tête* with the Bishop. He had recognised from the beginning that nothing of what he had done was really welcome or acceptable to Bishop Craye. While he felt himself a benefactor to the Church in general, and to the Bishop of Markborough in particular, instinctively he knew that the Bishop's taste ungratefully disapproved of him; and the knowledge contributed an extra shade of pomposity to his manner.

He had just given a sketch of the Church meeting at Upcote, and of the situation in the village up to date. The Bishop sat absently patting his thin knees, and evidently very much concerned.

'A most unpleasant—a most painful scene. I confess, Mr. Barron, I think it would have been far better if you had avoided it.'

Barron held himself rigidly erect.

'My lord—my one object from the beginning has been to force Meynell into the open. For his own sake—for the parish's—the situation must be brought to an end—in some way. The indecency of it at present is intolerable.'

'You forget. The trial is coming on. Meynell will certainly be deprived.'

'No doubt. But then there is the Privy Council appeal. And even when he is deprived, Meynell does not mean to leave the village. He has made all his arrangements to stay and defy the judgment. We must prove to him, even if we have to do it with what looks like harshness, that until he clears himself of this business, this diocese at least will have none of him!'

'Why, the great majority of the people adore him!' cried the Bishop. 'And meanwhile I understand the other poor things are already driven away. They tell me the Fox-Wiltons' house is to let, and Miss Puttenham gone to Paris indefinitely.'

Barron slightly shrugged his shoulders. 'We are all very sorry for them, my lord. It is indeed a sad business. But we must remember at the same time that all these persons have been in a conspiracy together to impose a falsehood on their neighbours; and that for many years we have been admitting Miss Puttenham to our house and our friendship—to the com-

panionship of our daughters—in complete ignorance of her character.’

‘Oh, poor thing! poor thing!’ said the Bishop hastily. ‘The thought of her haunts me. She must know what is going on—or a great deal of it—though indeed I hope she doesn’t—I hope with all my heart she doesn’t. Well, now, Mr. Barron—you have written me long letters—and I trust that you will allow me a little close inquiry into some of these matters—’

‘The closer the better, my lord.’

‘You have not as yet come to any opinion whatever as to the authorship of these letters?’

Barron looked troubled.

‘I am entirely at a loss,’ he said, emphatically. ‘Once or twice I have thought myself on the track. There is that man, East, whose licence Meynell opposed—’

‘One of the “aggrieved parishioners,”’ said the Bishop, raising his hands and eyebrows.

‘You regret, my lord, that we should be mixed up with such a person? So do I. But with a whole parish in a conspiracy to support the law-breaking that was going on, what could we do? However, that is not now the point. I have suspected East. I have questioned him. He showed extraordinary levity, and was—to myself personally—what I can only call insolent. But he swore to me that he had not written the letters; and indeed I am convinced that he could not have written them. He is almost an illiterate—can barely read and write. I still suspect him. But if he is in it, it is only as a tool of some one else.’

‘And the son—Judith Sabin’s son?’

‘Naturally, I have turned my mind in that direction also. But John Broad is a very simple fellow—has no enmity against Meynell—quite the contrary. He vows that he never knew why his mother went abroad with Lady Fox-Wilton, or why she went to America; and though she talked a lot of what he calls “queer stuff” in the few hours he had with her before my visit, and before her death, he couldn’t make head or tail of a good deal of it, and didn’t trouble his head about it. And after my visit he found her incoherent and delirious. Moreover, he declared to me solemnly that he knew nothing about the letter; and I certainly have no means of bringing it home to him.’

The Bishop’s blue eyes were sharply fixed upon the speaker.

But on the whole Barron's manner in these remarks had favourably impressed his companion.

'We come, then—' he said gravely—'to the further question which you will of course see will be asked—must be asked: Can you be certain that your own conversation—of course quite unconsciously on your part—has not given hints to some person—some unscrupulous third person—an enemy of Meynell's—who has been making use of information he may have got from you to write these letters? Forgive the inquiry—but you will realise how very important it is—for Church interests—that the suit against Meynell in the Church Courts should not be in any way mixed up with this wretched and discreditable business of the anonymous letters!'

Barron flushed a little.

'I have of course spoken of the matter in my own family,' he said proudly. 'I have already told you, my lord, that I confided the whole thing to my son Stephen very early in the day.'

The Bishop smiled.

'We may dismiss Stephen, I think—the soul of honour and devoted to Meynell. Can you remember no one else?'

Barron endeavoured to shew no resentment at these inquiries. But it was clear that they galled.

'The only other members of my household are my daughter Theresa, and occasionally, for a week or two, my son Maurice. I answer for them both.'

'Your son Maurice is at work in London.'

'He is in business—the manager of an office,' said Barron stiffly.

The Bishop's face was shrewdly thoughtful. After a pause he said—

'You have, of course, examined the handwriting? But I understand that recently all the letters have been typewritten?'

'All but two—the letter to Dawes, and a letter which I believe was received by Mrs. Elsmere. I gave the Dawes letter to Meynell at his request.'

'Having failed to identify the handwriting?'

'Certainly.'

Yet, even as he spoke, a sudden misgiving, like the pinch of an insect, brushed Barron's consciousness—for the first time. He had not, as a matter of fact, examined the Dawes letter very

carefully, having been, as he now clearly remembered, in a state of considerable mental excitement during the whole time it was in his possession, and thinking much more of the effect of the first crop of letters on the situation than of the details of the Dawes letter itself. But he did remember, now that the Bishop pressed him, that when he first looked at the letter he had been conscious of a momentary sense of likeness to a handwriting he knew—to Maurice's handwriting, in fact. But he had repelled the suggestion as absurd in the first instance, and after a momentary start he angrily repelled it now.

The Bishop emerged from a brown study.

'It is a most mysterious thing! Have you been able to verify the postmarks?'

'So far as I know, all the letters were posted at Markborough.'

'No doubt by some accomplice,' said the Bishop. He paused and sighed. Then he looked searchingly, though still hesitatingly, at his companion.

'Mr. Barron, I trust you will allow me—as your Bishop—one little reminder. As Christians, we must be slow to believe evil.'

Barron flushed again.

'I have been slow to believe it, my lord. But in all things I have put the Church's interest first.'

Something in the Bishop suddenly and sharply drew away from the man beside him. He held himself with a cold dignity.

'For myself, personally,—I tell you frankly—I cannot bring myself to believe a word of this story, so far as it concerns Meynell. I believe there is a terrible mistake at the bottom of it, and I prefer to trust twenty years of noble living rather than the tale of a poor distraught creature like Judith Sabin. At the same time, of course, I recognise that you have a right to your opinions, as I have to mine. But, my dear Sir—' and here the Bishop rose abruptly—'let me urge upon you one thing. Keep an open mind—not only for all that tells against Meynell, but all that tells for him! Don't—you will allow me this friendly word—don't land yourself in a great, perhaps a lifelong self-reproach!'

There was a note of sternness in the speaker's voice; but the small parchment face, and the eyes of china-blue, shone, as

though kindled from within by the pure and generous spirit of the man.

'My lord, I have said my say'—Barron had also risen, and stood towering over the Bishop. 'I leave it now in the hands of God.'

The Bishop winced again, and was holding out a limp hand for goodbye, when Barron said suddenly—

'Perhaps you will allow me one question, my lord. Has Meynell been to see you? Has he written to you even—a bare denial? I may say that I urged him to do so.'

The Bishop was taken aback and saw no way out.

'I have had no direct communication with him,' he said reluctantly; 'no doubt because of our already strained relations.'

On Barron's lip there dawned something which could hardly be called a smile,—or triumphant; but the Bishop caught it. In another minute the door had closed upon his visitor.

Barron walked away through the Close, his mind seething with anger and resentment. He felt that he had been treated as an embarrassment rather than an ally; that the Bishop's whole attitude had been grudging and unfriendly.

As he passed on to the broad stone pavement that bordered the south transept, he became aware of a man coming towards him. Raising his eyes, he saw that it was Meynell.

There was no means of avoiding the encounter. As the two men passed Barron made a mechanical sign of recognition. Meynell lifted his head and looked at him full. It was a strange look, intent and piercing, charged with the personality of the man behind it.

Barron passed on, quivering. He felt that he hated Meynell. The disguise of a public motive dropped away; and he knew that he hated him personally.

At the same time the sudden slight misgiving he had been conscious of in the Bishop's presence ran through him again. He feared he knew not what; and as he walked to the station the remembrance of Meynell's expression mingled with the vague uneasiness he tried in vain to put from him.

Meynell walked home by Forkèd Pond to Maudeley. He lingered a little in the leafless woods round the cottage, now shut up, and he chose the longer path that he might actually pass the very window near which Mary had stood when she spoke

those softly broken words—words from a woman's soul—which his memory had by heart. And his pulse leapt at the scarcely admitted thought that perhaps—now—in a few weeks he might be walking the dale paths with Mary. But there were stern things to be done first.

At Maudeley he found Flaxman awaiting him, and the two passed into the library, while Rose, though bubbling over with question and conjecture, self-denyingly refrained from joining them. The consultation of the two men lasted about an hour, and when Flaxman rejoined his wife, he came alone.

'Gone?' said Rose, with a disappointed look. 'Oh! I did want to shake his hand!'

Flaxman's gesture was unsympathetic.

'It is not the time for that yet. This business has gone deep with him. I don't exactly know what he will do. But he has made me promise various things.'

'When does he see—Torquemada?' said Rose, after a pause.

'I think—to-morrow morning.'

'H'm. Good luck to him! Please let me know also precisely when I may crush Lady St. Morice.'

Lady St. Morice was the wife of the Lord Lieutenant, and had at a recent dinner-party, in Rose's presence, hotly asserted her belief in the charges brought against the Rector of Upcote. She possessed a private chapel adorned with pre-Raphaelite frescoes, and was the sister of one of the chief leaders of the High Orthodox party in Convocation.

'She doesn't often speak to the likes of me,' said Rose, 'which of course is a great advantage for the likes of me. But next time I shall speak to her—which will be so good for her. My dear Hugh, don't let Meynell be too magnanimous!—I can't stand it.'

Flaxman laughed, but rather absently. It was evident that he was still under the strong impression of the conversation he had just passed through.

Rose stole up to him, and put her lips to his ear.

'Who—was—Hester's father?'

Flaxman looked up.

'I haven't the least idea.'

'But of course we must all know sometime,' said Rose discontentedly. 'Catharine knows already.'

Meynell passed that evening in his study, after some hours

spent in the Christmas business of a large parish. His mind was full of agitation, and when midnight struck, ushering in Christmas Eve, he was still undecided as to his precise course.

Among the letters of the day lying scattered beside him, on the floor, there was yet further evidence of the power of Barron's campaign. There were warm expressions indeed of sympathy and indignation to be found among them, but on the whole Meynell realised that his own side's belief in him was shewing some signs of distress, while the attack upon him was increasing in violence. His silence even to his most intimate friends, even to his Bishop; the disappearance from England of the other persons named in the scandal; the constant elaborations and embellishments of the story as it passed from mouth to mouth:—these things were telling against him steadily and disastrously.

As he hung over the fire, he anxiously reconsidered his conduct towards the Bishop, while Catharine's phrase—'He too has his rights!' lingered in his memory. He more than suspected that his silence had given pain; and his affection for the Bishop made the thought a sore one.

But after all what good would have been done, had he even put the Bishop in possession of the whole story? The Bishop's plain denial would have been added to his; nothing more. There could have been no explanation, public or private; nothing to persuade those who did not wish to be persuaded.

His thought wandered hither and thither. From the dim regions of the past there emerged a letter . . .

'My dear old Meynell—the thing is to be covered up. Ralph will acknowledge the child, and all precautions are to be taken. I think what he does he will do thoroughly. Alice wishes it—and what can I do, either for her or for the child? Nothing. And for me, I see but one way out—which will be the best for her too in the end, poor darling. My wife's letter a week ago destroyed my last hope. I am going out to-night—and I shall not come back. Stand by her, Richard. I think this kind of lie on which we are all embarked is wrong—(not that you had anything to do with it!) But it is society which is wrong and imposes it on us. Anyway the choice is made, and now you must support and protect her—and the child—for my sake. For I know you love me, dear boy—little as I deserve it. It is part of your general gift of loving, which has always seemed to



me so strange. However—whatever I was made for, you were made to help the lame dogs. So I have the less scruple in sending you this last word. She will want your help. The child's lot in that household will not be a happy one; and Alice will have to look on. But, help her!—help her above all to keep silence, for this thing, once done, must be irrevocable. Only so can my poor Alice recover her youth—think, she is only twenty now!—and the child's future be saved. Alice, I hope, will marry. And when the child marries, you may—nay, I think you must—tell the husband, which of course will involve her knowing also. I have written this to Ralph. But for all the rest of the world, the truth is now wiped out. The child is no longer mine—Alice was never my love—and I am going to the last sleep. My sister Fanny Meryon knows something; enough to make her miserable; but no names or details. Well!—goodbye. In your company alone have I ever seemed to touch the life that might have been mine. But it is too late. The will in me—the mainspring—is diseased. This is a poor return—but forgive me!—my very dear Richard! Here comes the boat; and there is a splendid sea rising.'

There, in a locked drawer, not far from him, lay this letter. Meynell's thought plunged back into the past; into its passionate feeling, its burning pity, its powerless affection. He recalled his young hero-worship for his brilliant kinsman; the hour when he had identified the battered form on the shore of the Donegal Lough; the sight of Alice's young anguish; and all the subsequent effort on his part, for Christ's sake, for Neville's sake, to help and shield a woman and child—effort from which his own soul had learnt so much.

Pure and sacred recollections!—mingled often with the moral or intellectual perplexities that enter into all things human.

Then—at a bound—his thoughts rushed on to the man who, without pity, without shame, had dragged all these sad things, these helpless irreparable griefs, into the cruel light of a malicious publicity—in the name of Christ—in the name of the Church!

To-morrow! He rose, with a face set like iron, and went back to his table to finish a half-written review.

'Theresa—after eleven—I shall be engaged. See that I am not disturbed.'



Theresa murmured assent, but when her father closed the door of her sitting-room, she did not go back immediately to her household accounts. Her good plain face showed a disturbed mind.

Her father's growing excitability and irritation, and the bad accounts of Maurice, troubled her sorely. It was only that morning Mr. Barron had become aware that Maurice had lost his employment, and was again adrift in the world. Theresa had known it for a week or two, but had not been allowed to tell. And she tried not to remember how often of late her brother had applied to her for money.

Going back to her accounts with a sigh, she missed a necessary receipt and went into the dining-room to look for it. While she was there, the front-door bell rang and was answered, unheard by her. Thus it fell out that as she came back into the hall, she found herself face to face with Richard Meynell.

She stood paralysed with astonishment. He bowed to her gravely and passed on. Something in his look seemed to her to spell calamity. She went back to her room, and sat there dumb and trembling; dreading what she might see or hear.

Meanwhile Meynell had been ushered into Barron's study by the old butler, who was no less astonished than his mistress.

Barron rose stiffly to meet his visitor. The two men stood opposite each other as the door closed.

Barron spoke first.

'You will, I trust, let me know, Mr. Meynell, without delay to what I owe this unexpected visit. I was of course quite ready to meet your desire for an interview, but your letter gave me no clue—'

'I thought it better not,' said Meynell quietly. 'May we sit down?'

Barron mechanically waved the speaker to a chair, and sat down himself. Meynell seemed to pause a moment, his eyes on the ground. Then suddenly he raised them.

'Mr. Barron, what I have come to say will be a shock to you. I have discovered the author of the anonymous letters which have now for nearly three months been defiling this parish and diocese.'

Barron's sudden movement showed the effect of the words. But he held himself well in hand.

'I congratulate you,' he said coldly. 'It is what we have all been trying to discover.'

'But the discovery will be painful to you. For the author of these letters, Mr. Barron—is—your son Maurice!'

At these words, spoken with an indescribable intensity and firmness, Barron sprang from his seat.

'It was not necessary, I think, Sir, to come to my house in order to insult my family and myself! It would have been better to write. And you may be very sure that if you cannot punish your slanderers we can—and will!'

His attitude expressed a quivering fury. Meynell took a packet from his breast-pocket and quietly laid it on the table beside him.

'In this envelope you will find a document—a confession of a piece of wrongdoing on Maurice's part of which I believe you have never been informed. His poor sister concealed it—and paid for it. Do you remember, three years ago, the letting loose of some valuable young horses from Farmer Grange's stables—the hue-and-cry after them—and the difficulty there was in recapturing them on the Chase?'

Barron stared at the speaker—speechless.

'You may perhaps recollect that a certain young fellow was accused—James Aston—one of my Sunday-school teachers—who had proposed to Grange's daughter, and had been sent about his business by the father? Aston was in fact just about to be run in by the police, when a clue came to my hands. I followed it up. Then I found out that the ringleader in the whole affair had been—your son Maurice. If you remember, he was then at home, hanging about the village, and he had had a quarrel with Grange,—I forget about what. He wrote an anonymous post-card accusing Aston. However, I got on the track; and finally I made him give me a written confession—to protect Aston. Heavy compensation was paid to Grange—by your daughter—and the thing was hushed up. I was always doubtful whether I ought not to have come to you. But it was not long after the death of your wife. I was very sorry for you all—and Maurice pleaded hard. I told Stephen, however, and I kept the confession. I came upon it a night or two ago, in the drawer where I had also placed the letter to Dawes which I got from you. Suddenly, the likeness in the handwritings struck me; and I made a very careful comparison.'

He opened the packet, and took out the two papers, which he offered to Barron.

'I think, if you will compare the marked passages, you will see at least a striking resemblance.'

With a shaking hand Barron refused the papers.

'I have no doubt, Sir, you can manufacture any evidence you please!—but I do not intend to follow you through it. Handwriting, as we all know, can be made to prove anything. Reserve your documents for your solicitor. I shall at once instruct mine.'

'But I am only at the beginning of my case,' said Meynell, with the same composure. 'I think you had better listen . . . A passage in one of the more recent letters, which had been sent to me, gave me another hint. I went straight to East the publican, and taxed him with being the accomplice of the writer. I blustered a little—he thought I had more evidence than I had—and at last I got the whole thing out of him. The first letter was written'—the speaker raised his finger, articulating each word with slow precision, 'by your son Maurice, and posted by East, the day after the cage accident at the Victoria pit; and they have pursued the same division of labour ever since. East confesses he was induced to do it by the wish to revenge himself on me for the loss of his licence; and Maurice occasionally gave him a little money. I have all the dates of the letters, and a statement of where they were posted. If necessary, East will give evidence.'

A silence. Barron had resumed his seat, and was automatically lifting a small book which lay on a table near him and letting it fall, while Meynell was speaking. When Meynell paused, he said thickly:

'A plausible tale, no doubt—and a very convenient one for you. But allow me to point out, it rests entirely on East's word. Very likely he wrote the letters himself, and is attempting to make Maurice the scapegoat.'

'Where do you suppose he could have got his information from?' said Meynell, looking up. 'There is no suggestion that he saw Judith Sabin before her death.'

Barron's face worked, while Meynell watched him implacably. At last he said:

'How should I know? The same question applies to Maurice.'

'Not at all. There the case is absolutely clear. Maurice got his information from you.'

'A gratuitous statement, Sir!—which you cannot prove.'

'From you'—repeated Meynell. 'And from certain spying operations that he and East undertook together. Do you deny that you told Maurice all that Judith Sabin told you—together with her identification of myself?'

The room seemed to wait for Barron's reply. He made none. He burst out instead:

'What possible motive could Maurice have had for such an action? The thing isn't even plausible!'

'Oh, Maurice had various old scores to settle with me,' said Meynell, quietly. 'I have come across him more than once in this parish—no need to say how. I tried to prevent him from publicly disgracing himself and you; and I did prevent him. He saw in this business an easy revenge on a sanctimonious parson who had interfered with his pleasures.'

Barron had risen and was pacing the room with unsteady steps. Meynell still watched him, with the same glitter in the eye. Meynell's whole nature, at the moment, seemed to have gathered itself into one avenging force; he was at once sword and smiter. The man before him seemed to him embodied cruelty and hypocrisy; he felt neither pity nor compunction. And presently he said abruptly—

'But I am afraid I have much more serious matter to lay before you than this business of the letters.'

'What do you mean?'

Taking another letter from his pocket, Meynell glanced at it a moment, and then handed it to Barron. Barron was for an instant inclined to refuse it, as he had refused the others. But Meynell insisted.

'Believe me, you had better read it. It is a letter from Mr. Flaxman to myself, and it concerns a grave charge against your son. I bring you a chance of saving him from prosecution; but there is no time to be lost.'

Barron took the letter, carried it to the window, and stood reading it. Meynell sat on the other side of the room watching him, still in the same impassive 'possessed' state.

Suddenly, Barron put his hand over his face, and a groan he could not repress broke from him. He turned his back and stood bending over the letter.

At the same instant a shiver ran through Meynell, like the

return to life of some arrested energy, some paralysed power. The shock of that sound of suffering had found him iron; it left him flesh. The spiritual habit of a lifetime revived; for 'what we do we are.'

He rose slowly, and went over to the window.

'You can still save him—from the immediate consequences of this at least—if you will. I have arranged that with Flaxman. It was my seeing him enter the room alone where the coins were, the night of the party, that first led to the idea that he might have taken them. Then, as you see, certain dealers' shops were watched by a private detective. Maurice appeared—sold the Hermes coin—was traced to his lodgings and identified. So far the thing has not gone beyond private enquiry; for the dealer will do what Flaxman wants him to do. But Maurice still has the Athene, the more famous of the two coins; and if he attempts to sell that, after the notices to the police, there may be an exposure any day. You must go up to London as soon as you can——'

'I will go to-night,' said Barron, in a tone scarcely to be heard. He stood with his hands on his sides staring out upon the wintry garden outside, just as a gardener's boy laden with holly and ivy for the customary Christmas decorations of the house was passing across the lawn.

There was silence a little. Meynell walked slowly up and down the room. At last Barron turned towards him; and the very incapacity of the plump and ruddy face for any tragic expression made it the more tragic.

'I propose to write to the Bishop at once. Do you desire a public statement?'

'There must be a public statement,' said Meynell gravely. 'The thing has gone too far. Flaxman and I have drawn one up. Will you look at it?'

Barron took it, and went to his writing-table.

'Wait a moment!' said Meynell, following him, and laying his hand on the open page. 'I don't want you to sign that by *force majeure*. Dismiss—if you can—any thought of any hold I may have upon you, because of Maurice's misdoing. You and I, Barron, have known each other some years. We were once friends. I ask you—not under any threat—not under any compulsion—to accept my word as an honest man that I am absolutely innocent of the charge you have brought against me.'

Barron, who was sitting before his writing-table, buried his face in his hands a moment; then raised it.

'I accept it,' he said, almost inaudibly.

'You believe me?'

'I believe you.'

Meynell drew a long breath. Then he added, with a first sign of emotion: 'And I may also count upon your doing henceforth what you can to protect that poor lady Miss Puttenham, and her kinsfolk, from the consequences of this long persecution?'

Barron made a sign of assent. Meynell left him to read and sign the public apology and retraction which Flaxman had mainly drawn up; while the Rector himself took up a Bradshaw lying on the table, and walked to the window to consult it.

'You will catch the 1.40,' he said, as Barron rose from the writing-table. 'Let me advise you to get him out of the country for a time.'

Barron said nothing. He came heavily towards the window, and the two men stood looking at each other, overtaken both of them by a mounting wave of consciousness. The events, passions, emotions of the preceding months pressed into memory and beat against the silence. But it was Meynell who turned pale.

'What a pity to spoil the fight!' he said in a low voice. 'It would have been splendid to fight it fair.'

'I shall of course withdraw my name from the Arches suit,' said Barron, leaning over a chair, his eyes on the ground.

Meynell did not reply. He took up his hat; only saying as he went towards the door:

'Remember, Flaxman holds his hand entirely. The situation is with you.' Then, after a moment's hesitation, he added simply, almost shyly: 'God help you! Won't you consult your daughter?'

Barron made no answer. The door opened and shut.

## CHAPTER XX.

A MILD January day on the terrace of St. Germain's. After a morning of hoar-frost the sun was shining brightly on the terrace, and on the panorama it commands. A pleasant light lay on the charming houses that front the skirts of the forest, on the blue-

grey windings of the Seine, on the groves of leafless poplars interwoven with its course, on the plain with its thickly sown villages, on the height of Mont Valérien, behind which lay Paris. In spite of the sunshine, however, it was winter, and there was no movement in St. Germain. The terrace and the road leading from it to the town were deserted; and it was easy to see from the aspect of the famous hotel at the corner of the terrace that, although not closed, it despaired of visitors. Only a trio of French officers in the far distance of the terrace, and a white-capped *bonne* struggling against the light wind with a basket on her arm, offered any sign of life to the observant eyes of a young man who was briskly pacing up and down that section of the terrace which abuts on the hotel.

The young man was Philip Meryon. His dark tweed suit and fur waistcoat disclosed a figure once singularly agile and slender, on which self-indulgence was now beginning to tell. Nevertheless, as the *bonne* passed him she duly noted and admired his pictorial good looks, opining at the same time that he was not French. Why was he there? She decided in her own mind that he was there for an assignation, by which she meant of course a meeting with a married woman; and she smiled the incorrigible French smile.

Assignation or no, she would have seen, had she looked closer, that the young man in question was in no merely beatific or expectant frame of mind. Meryon's look was a look both of excitement,—as of one under the influence of some news of a startling kind—and of anxiety.

Would she come? And if she came would he be able to bring and hold her to any decision, without—without doing what even he shrank from doing?

For that ill chance in a thousand which Meynell had foreseen, and hoped, as mortals do, to baffle, had come to pass. That morning a careless letter enclosing the payment of a debt, and written by a young actor, who had formed part of one of the Bohemian parties at the Abbey, during the summer, and had now been playing for a week in the Markborough theatre, had given Meryon the clue to the many vague conjectures or perplexities which had already crossed his mind with regard to Hester's origin and history.

'Your sanctified cousin, Richard Meynell'—wrote the young man—'seems after all to be made of the common clay. There



are strange stories going the round about him here; especially in a crop of anonymous letters of which the author can't be found. I send you a local newspaper which has dared to print one of them with dashes for the names. The landlord of the inn told me how to fill them up, and you will see I have done it. The beauteous maiden herself has vanished from the scene—as no doubt you know. Indeed you probably know all about it. However, as you are abroad, and not likely to see these local rags, and as no London paper will print these things, you may perhaps be interested in what I enclose. Alack, my dear Philip, for the saints! They seem not so very different from you and me.'

The eagerness with which Philip had read the newspaper-cutting enclosed in the letter was only equalled by the eagerness with which afterwards he fell to meditating upon it; pursuing and ferreting out the truth, through a maze of personal recollection and inference.

Richard!—nonsense! He laughed, from a full throat. Not for one moment was Philip misled by Judith Sabin's mistake. He was a man of great natural shrewdness, blunted no doubt by riotous living; but there was enough of it left, aided by his recent forced contacts with his cousin Richard, all turning on the subject of Hester, to keep him straight. So that without any demur at all he rejected the story as it stood.

But then, what was the fact behind it? Impossible that Judith Sabin's story should be all delusion! For whom did she mistake Richard?

Suddenly, as he sat brooding and smoking, a vision of Hester flashed upon him, as she had stood laughing and pouting beneath the full-length picture of Neville Flood, which hung in the big hall of the Abbey. He had pointed it out to her on their way through the house—where she had refused to linger—to the old garden behind.

He could hear his own question: 'There!—aren't you exactly like him? Turn and look at yourself in the glass opposite. Oh, you needn't be offended! He was the handsome man of his day.'

Of course! The truth jumped to the eyes, now that one was put in the way of seeing it. And on this decisive recollection there had followed a rush of others, no less pertinent; things said by his dead mother about the brother whom she had loved



and bitterly regretted. So the wronged lady whom he would have married but for his wife's obstinacy was 'Aunt Alice!' Philip remembered to have once seen her from a distance in the Upcote woods. Hester had pointed her out, finger on lip, as they stood hiding in a thicket of fern; a pretty woman still. His mother had never mentioned a name; probably she had never known it; but to the love-affair she had always attributed some share in her brother's death.

From point to point he tracked it, the poor secret; till he had run it down. By degrees everything fitted in; he was confident that he had guessed the truth.

Then, abruptly, he turned to look at its bearing on his own designs and fortunes.

He supposed himself to be in love with Hester. At any rate he was violently conscious of that hawk-like instinct of pursuit which he was accustomed to call love. Hester's mad and childish imprudences, which the cooler self in Meryon was quite ready to recognise as such, had made the hawking a singularly easy task so far. Meynell, of course, had put up difficulties; with regard to this Scotch business it had been necessary to lie pretty hard, and to bribe some humble folk in order to get round him. But Hester, by the double fact that she was at once so far removed from the mere *ingénue* and so incredibly ready to risk herself out of sheer ignorance of life, both challenged and tempted the man whom a disastrous fate had brought across her path, to such a point that he had long since lost control of himself, and parted with any scruples of conscience he might possess.

At the same time he was by no means sure of her. He realised his increasing power over her; he also realised the wild, independent streak in her. Some day—any day—the capricious, wilful nature might tire, might change. The prey might escape, and the hawk go empty home. No dallying too long! Let him decide what to risk—and risk it.

Meantime that confounded cousin of his was hard at work, through some very capable lawyers, and unless the instructions he—Philip—had conveyed to the woman in Scotland, who, thank goodness, was no less anxious to be rid of him than he to be rid of her, were very shrewdly and exactly carried out, facts might in the end reach Hester, which would give even her recklessness pause. He knew that so far Meynell had been

baffled; he knew that he carried about with him evidence that, for the present, could be brought to bear on Hester with effect; but things were by no means safe.

For his own affairs, they were desperate. As he stood there, he was nothing more in fact than the common needy adventurer, possessed, however, of greater daring, imagination, and brain than most such persons. His financial resources were practically at an end, and he had come to look upon a clandestine marriage with Hester as the best means of replenishing them. The Fox-Wilton family passed for rich; and the notion that they must and would be ready to come forward with money, when once the thing was irrevocable, counted for much in the muddy plans of which his mind was full. His own idea was to go to South America—to Buenos Ayres, where money was to be made, and where he had some acquaintance. In that way he would shake off his creditors and the Scotch woman all together; and Meynell would know better than to interfere.

Suddenly a light figure came fluttering round the corner of the road leading to the château and the town. Philip turned and went to meet it. And as he approached Hester he was shaken by the excitement of her presence, in addition to that which already possessed him. Her wild provocative beauty seemed to light up the whole wintry scene; and the few passers-by, each and all, stopped to stare at her. Hester laughed aloud when she saw Meryon; and with her usual recklessness held up her umbrella for signal. It pleased her that two *rapins* in large black ties and steeple-hats paid her an insolent attention as they passed her; and she stopped to pinch the cheek of a chubby child that had planted itself straight in her path.

'Am I late?' she said, as they met. 'I only just caught the train. Oh! I am so hungry! Don't let's talk—let's *déjeuner*.'

Philip laughed.

'Will you dare the hotel?'

And he pointed to the Pavillon Henri Quatre.

'Why not? Probably there won't be a soul.'

'There are always Americans.'

'Why not again? *Tant mieux!* Oh my hair!'

And she put up her two ungloved hands to try and reduce it to something like order. The loveliness of the young curving

form, of the pretty hands, of the golden-brown hair, struck full on Meryon's turbid sense.

They turned towards the hotel, and were presently seated in a corner of its glazed gallery, with all the wide prospect of plain and river spread beneath them. Hester was in the highest spirits, and as she sat waiting for the first *plat*, chattering, and nibbling at her roll, her black felt hat with its plume of cock feathers falling back from the brilliance of her face, she once more attracted all the attention available; from the two savants who after a morning in the château were lunching at a further table; from an American family of all ages reduced to silence by sheer wonder and contemplation; from the waiters, and, not least, from the hotel dog wagging his tail mutely at her knee.

Philip felt himself an envied person. He was, indeed, vain of his companion; but certain tyrannical instincts asserted themselves once or twice. When, or if, she became his possession, he would try and moderate some of this chatter and noise.

For the present he occupied himself with playing to her lead; glancing every now and then mentally, with a secret start, at the information he had possessed about her since the morning.

She described to him, with a number of new tricks of gesture caught from her French class-mates, how she had that morning outwitted all her guardians, who supposed that she had gone to Versailles with one of the senior members of the class she was attending at the Conservatoire, a young teacher, '*très sage*,' with whom she had been allowed once or twice to go to museums and galleries. To accomplish it had required an elaborate series of deceptions, which Hester had carried through, apparently, without a qualm. Except that at the end of her story there was a passing reference to Aunt Alice—'poor darling!'—'who would have a fit if she knew.'

Philip, coffee-cup in hand, half-smiling, looked at her meantime through his partially closed lids. Richard, indeed! She was Neville all through—the Neville of the picture, except for the colour of the hair, and the soft femininity. And here she sat, prattling—foolish dear!—about 'Mamma,' and 'Aunt Alice,' and 'my tiresome sisters!'

'Certainly you shall not pay for me!—not a *sou*,' said Hester, flushing. 'I have plenty of money. Take it, please,

at once.' And she pushed her share over the table with a peremptory gesture.

Meryon took it with a smile and a shrug, and she, throwing away the cigarette she had been defiantly smoking, rose from the table.

'Now then, what shall we do? Oh! no museums! I am being educated to death! Let us go for a walk in the forest; and then I must catch my train, or the world will go mad.'

So they walked briskly into the forest, and were soon sufficiently deep among its leaf-strewn paths to be secure from all observation. Two hours remained of wintry sunlight before they must turn back towards the station.

Philip felt a rush of excitement in his veins.

Hester walked along swinging a small silk bag in which she carried her handkerchief and purse. Suddenly, in a narrow path girt by some tall hollies and withered oaks, she let it fall. Both stooped for it, their hands touched, and as Hester rose she found herself in Meryon's arms.

She made a violent effort to free herself, and when it failed, she stood still and submitted to be kissed like one who accepts an experience, with a kind of proud patience.

'You think you love me,' she said at last, pushing him away. 'I wonder whether you do!'

And, flushed and panting, she leant against a tree, looking at him with a strange expression, in which melancholy mingled with resentment; passing slowly into something else—that soft and shaken look, that yearning of one longing and yet fearing to be loved, which had struck dismay into Meynell on the afternoon when he had pursued her to the Abbey.

Philip came close to her.

'You think I have no Roddy!' she said, with bitterness. 'Don't kiss me again!'

He refrained. But catching her hand, and leaning against the trunk beside her, he poured into her ear protestations and flattery; the ordinary language of such a man at such a moment. Hester listened to it with a kind of eagerness. Sometimes, with a slight frown, as though ear and mind waited, intently, for something that did not come.

'I wonder how many people you have said the same things to before!' she said suddenly, looking searchingly into his face. 'What have you got to tell me about that Scotch girl?'

'Richard's Scotch girl?'—he laughed, throwing his handsome head back against the tree—'whom Richard supposes me to have married? Well, I had a great flirtation with her, I admit, two years ago, and it is sometimes rather difficult in Scotland to know whether you are married or no. You know of course that all that's necessary is to declare yourselves man and wife before witnesses? However—perhaps you would like to see a letter from the lady herself on the subject?'

'You had it ready?' she said, doubtfully.

'Well, considering that Richard has been threatening me for months, not only with the loss of you, but with all sorts of pains and penalties besides, I have had to do something! Of course I have done a great deal. This is one of the documents in the case. It is an affidavit really, drawn up for my solicitor—by the lady whom Richard supposes to be my injured wife!'

He placed an envelope in her hands.

Hester opened it with a touch of scornful reluctance. It contained a categorical denial and repudiation of the supposed marriage.

'Has Uncle Richard seen it?' she asked coldly, as she gave it back to him.

'Certainly he has, by now.' He took another envelope from his pocket. 'I won't bother you with anything more—the thing is really too absurd!—but here, if you want it, is a letter from the girl's brother. Brothers are generally supposed to keep a sharp look-out on their sisters, aren't they? Well, this brother declares that Meynell's inquiries have come to nothing, absolutely nothing, in the neighbourhood—except that they have made people very angry. He has got no evidence—simply because there is none to get! I imagine, indeed, that by now he has dropped the whole business. And certainly it is high time he did; or I shall have to be taking action on my own account before long!'

He looked down upon her, as she stood beside him, trying to make out her expression.

'Hester!' he broke out, 'don't let's talk about this any more—it's damned nonsense! Let's talk about ourselves. Hester!—darling!—I want to make you happy!—I want to carry you away. Hester, will you marry me at once? As far as the French law is concerned, I have arranged it all. You could come with me to a certain Mairie I know, to-morrow, and we

could marry without anybody having a word to say to it; and then, Hester, I'd carry you to Italy! I know a villa on the Riviera—the Italian Riviera—in a little bay all orange and lemon and blue sea. We'd honeymoon there; and when we were tired of honeymooning—though how could anyone tire of honeymooning with you, you darling!—we'd go to South America. I have an opening at Buenos Ayres which promises to make me a rich man. Come with me!—it is the most wonderful country in the world. You would be adored there—you would have every luxury—we would travel and ride and explore—we'd have a glorious life!'

He had caught her hands again, and stood towering over her, intoxicated with his own tinsel phrases; almost sincere; a splendid physical presence, save for the slight thickening of face and form, the looseness of the lips, the absence of all freshness in the eyes.

But Hester, after a first moment of dreamy excitement, drew herself decidedly away.

'No, no!—I can't be such a wretch—I can't! Mamma and Aunt Alice would break their hearts. I'm a selfish beast, but not quite so bad as that! No, Philip, we can meet and amuse ourselves, can't we?—and get to know each other—and then, if we want to, we can marry afterwards.'

'That means you don't love me!' he said, fiercely.

'Yes, yes I do!—or at least I—I like you. And perhaps in time—if you let me alone—if you don't tease me—I—I'll marry you. But let's do it openly. It's amusing to get one's own way, even by lies, up to a certain point. They wouldn't let me see you, or get to know you—and I was determined to know you. So I had to behave like a little cad, or give in. But marrying's different.'

He argued with her hotly, pointing out the certainty of Meynell's opposition, exaggerating the legal powers of guardians, declaring vehemently that it was now or never. Hester grew very white, as they wandered on through the forest, but she did not yield. Some last scruple of conscience, perhaps some secret dread or misgiving, possessed her.

So that in the end Philip was pushed to the villainy that even he would have avoided.

Suddenly he turned upon her.

'Hester, you drive me to it! I don't want to—but I must.'

Hester, you poor darling!—you don't know what has happened—you don't know what a position you're in. I want to save you from it. I would have done it without telling you the truth if I could; but you drive me to it!'

'What on earth do you mean?'

She stopped beside him in a clearing of the forest. The pale afternoon sun, now dropping fast to westward, slipped through the slender oaks, on which the red leaves still danced, touched the girl's hair and shone into her beautiful eyes. She stood there so young, so unconscious; a victim, on the threshold of doom. Philip, who was no more a monster than other men who do monstrous things, felt a sharp stab of compunction; and then rushed headlong at the crime he had practically resolved on before they met.

He told her in a few agitated words the whole—and the true—story of her birth. He described the return of Judith Sabin to Upcote Minor, and the narrative she had given to Henry Barron; without however a word of Meynell in the case, so far at least as the original events were concerned. For he was convinced that he knew better, and that there was no object in prolonging an absurd misunderstanding. His version of the affair was, that Judith in a fit of excitement had revealed Hester's parentage to Henry Barron; that Barron out of enmity towards Meynell, Hester's guardian, and by way of getting a hold upon him, had not kept the matter to himself, but had either written or instigated anonymous letters which had spread such excitement in the neighbourhood that Lady Fox-Wilton had now let her house, and practically left Upcote for good. The story had become the common talk of the Markborough district; and all that Meynell, and 'your poor mother,' and the Fox-Wilton family could do, was to attempt, on the one hand, to meet the rush of scandal by absence and silence; and on the other to keep the facts from Hester herself as long as possible.

The girl had listened to him with wide, startled eyes. Occasionally a sound broke from her—a gasp—an exclamation—and when he paused, pursued by almost a murderer's sense of guilt, he saw her totter. In an instant he had his arm round her, and for once there was both real passion and real pity in the excited words he poured into her ears.

'Hester, dearest!—don't cry, don't be miserable!—my own beautiful Hester! I am a beast to have told you, but it is



because I am not only your lover, but your cousin—your own flesh and blood. Trust yourself to me! You'll see! Why should that preaching fellow, Meynell, interfere? I'll take care of you. You come to me, and we'll shew these wretched scandalmongers that what they say is nothing to us—that we don't care a fig for their cant—that we are the masters of our own lives—not they!'

And so on, and so on. The emotion was as near sincerity as he could push it; but it did not fail to occur, at least once, to a mind steeped in third-rate drama, what a 'strong' dramatic scene might be drawn from the whole situation.

Hester heard him for a few minutes, in evident stupefaction; then with a recovery of physical equilibrium she again vehemently repulsed him.

'You are mad—you are *mad*! It is abominable to talk to me like this. What do you mean? "My poor mother"—who is my mother!'

She faced him tragically, the certainty which was already dawning in her mind,—prepared indeed, through years, by all the perplexities and rebellions of her girlhood—betraying itself in her quivering face and lips. Suddenly, she dropped upon a fallen log beside the path, hiding her face in her hands, struggling again with the sheer faintness of the shock. And Philip, kneeling in the dry leaves beside her, completed his work, with the cruel mercy of the man who kills what he has wounded.

He asked her to look back into her childhood; he reminded her of the many complaints she had made to him of her sense of isolation within her supposed family; of the strange provisions of Sir Ralph's will; of the arrangement which had made her Meynell's ward in a special sense.

'Why, of course, that was so natural! You remember I suggested to you once that Richard probably judged Neville from the same Puritanical standpoint that he judged me? Well, I was a fool to talk like that. I remember now perfectly what my mother used to say. They were of different generations, but they were tremendous friends; and there was only a few years between them. I am certain it was by Neville's wish that Richard became your guardian.' He laughed, in some embarrassment. 'He couldn't exactly foresee that another member of the family would want to cut in. Hester, my pretty, pretty darling—look at me! I love you!—I adore you! Let's



give all these people the slip. I'll show you what life means—what love means!'

And doubly tempted by her abasement, her bewildered pain, he tried again to take her in his arms.

But she held him at arm's length.

'If,' she said, with pale lips—'if Sir Neville was my father—and Aunt Alsie—' her voice failed her—'Were they—were they never married?'

He slowly and reluctantly shook his head.

'Then I'm—I'm—— Oh! but that's monstrous—that's absurd! I don't believe it!'

She sprang to her feet. Then, as she stood confronting his silence, the whole episode of that bygone September afternoon—the miniature—Aunt Alice's silence and tears—rushed back on memory. She trembled, and the iron entered into her soul.

'Let's go back to the station,' she said, resolutely. 'It's time.'

They walked back through the forest paths, for some time without speaking, she refusing his aid. And all the time swiftly, inexorably, memory and inference were at work, dragging to light the deposit—obscure, or troubling, or contradictory—left in her by the facts and feelings of her childhood and youth.

She had told him with emphasis at luncheon that he was not to be allowed to accompany her home; that she would go back to Paris by herself. But when, at the St. Germain station, Meryon jumped into the empty railway-carriage beside her, she said nothing to prevent him. She sat in the darkest corner of the carriage, her arms hanging beside her, her eyes fixed on objects of which she saw nothing. Her pride in herself, her ideal of herself, which is to every young creature like the protective sheath to the flower, was stricken to the core. She thought of Sarah and Lulu, whom she had all her life despised and ridiculed. But they had a right to their name and place in the world!—and she was their nameless inferior, the child taken in out of pity, accepted on sufferance. She thought of the gossip now rushing like a mud-laden stream through every Upcote or Markborough drawing-room. All the persons whom she had snubbed or flouted were concerning themselves maliciously with her and her affairs; were pitying 'poor Hester Fox-Wilton.'

Her heart seemed to dry and harden within her. The strange thought of her real mother—her suffering, patient.

devoted mother—did not move her. It was bound up with all that trampled on and humiliated her.

And, moreover, strange and piteous fact, realised by them both!—this sudden sense of fall and degradation had in some mysterious way altered her whole relation to the man who had brought it upon her. His evil power over her had increased. He felt instinctively that he need not in future be so much on his guard. His manner towards her became freer. She had never yet returned him the kisses which, as on this day, she had sometimes allowed him to snatch. But before they reached Paris she had kissed him; she had sought his hands with hers; and she had promised to meet him again.

While these lamentable influences and events were thus sweeping Hester's life towards the abyss, mocking all the sacrifices and the efforts that had been made to save her, the publication of Barron's apology had opened yet another stage in 'the Meynell case.'

As drafted by Flaxman it was certainly comprehensive enough. For himself, Meynell would have been content with much less; but in dealing with Barron, he was the avenger of wrongs not his own, both public and private; and when his own first passion of requital had passed away, killed in him by the anguish of his enemy, he still let Flaxman decide for him. And Flaxman, the mildest and most placable of men, showed himself here inexorable, and would allow no softening of terms. So that Barron 'unreservedly withdrew' and 'publicly apologised' 'for those false and calumnious charges, which to my great regret, and on erroneous information, I have been led to bring against the character and conduct of the Rev. Richard Meynell, at various dates, and in various ways, during the six months preceding the date of this apology.'

With regard to the anonymous letters—'although they were not written, nor in any way authorised by me, I now discover to my sorrow that they were written by a member of my family on information derived from me. I apologise for and repudiate the false and slanderous statements these letters contain, and those also included in letters I myself have written to various persons. I agree that a copy of this statement shall be sent to the Bishop of Markborough, and to each parish clergyman in the diocese of Markborough; as also that it shall be published in such

newspapers as the solicitors of the Rev. Richard Meynell may determine.'

The document appeared first on a Saturday, in all the local papers, and was greedily read and discussed by the crowds that throng into Markborough on market day, who again carried back the news to the villages of the diocese. It was also published on the same day in the 'Modernist' and in the leading religious papers. Its effect on opinion was rapid and profound. The Bishop telegraphed—'Thank God! Come and see me.' France fidgeted a whole morning among his papers, began two or three letters to Meynell, and finally decided that he could write nothing adequate that would not also be hypocritical. Dornal wrote a little note that Meynell put away among those records that mark the track of life. From all the leading Modernists, during January, came a rush of correspondence and congratulations, in all possible notes and tones of indignant triumph; and many leaders on the other side wrote with generous emotion and relief. Only in the extreme camp of the extreme Right was there silence and chagrin. Compared to the eternal interests of the Church, what does one man's character matter?

The old Bishop of Dunchester, a kind of English Dollinger, the learned leader of a learned party, and ready in the last years of life to risk what would have tasked the nerves and courage of a man in the prime of physical and mental power, wrote:

'My dear Richard Meynell,—Against my better judgment, I was persuaded that you might have been imprudent. I now know that you have only been heroic. Forgive me—forgive us all. Nothing will induce me to preach the sermon of our opening day. And if you will not, who will, or can?'

Rose meanwhile descended upon the Rectory, and with Flaxman's help, though in the teeth of Ann's jealous opposition, she carried off Meynell to Maudeley, that she might 'help him with his letters,' and watch for a week or two over a man wearied and overtaxed. It was by her means also that the reaction in public opinion spread far beyond Meynell himself. It is true that even men and women of goodwill looked at each other in bewilderment, after the publication of the apology, and asked each other under their breaths—'Then is there no story!—and was Judith Sabin's whole narrative a delusion?' But with whatever might be true in that narrative no public interest

was now bound up; and discussion grew first shamefaced, and then dropped. The tendency strengthened indeed to regard the whole matter as the invention of a half-crazy and dying woman, possessed of some grudge against the Fox-Wilton family. Many surmised that some tragic fact lay at the root of the tale, since those concerned had not chosen to bring the slanderer to account. But what had once been mere matter for malicious or idle curiosity was now handled with compunction and good feeling. People began to be very sorry for the Fox-Wiltons, very sorry for 'poor Miss Puttenham.' Cards were left, and friendly inquiries were made; and amid the general wave of scepticism and regret, the local society showed itself as sentimental and as futile as usual.

Meanwhile poor Theresa had been seen driving to the station with red eyes; and her father, it was ascertained, had been absent from home since the day before the publication of the apology. It was very commonly guessed that the 'member of my family' responsible for the letters was the unsatisfactory younger son; and many persons, especially in Church circles, were secretly sorry for Barron, while everybody possessed of any heart at all was sorry for his elder son Stephen.

Stephen indeed was one of Meynell's chief anxieties during these intermediate hours, when a strong man took a few days' breathing-space between the effort that had been, and the effort that was to be. The young man would come over, day by day, with the same crushed, patient look, now bringing news to Meynell which they talked over where none might overhear, and now craving news from Paris in return. As to Stephen's own report, Barron, it seemed, had made all arrangements to send Maurice to a firm of English merchants trading at Riga. The head of the firm was under an old financial obligation to Henry Barron, and Stephen had no doubt that his father had made it heavily worth their while to give his brother this fresh chance of an honest life. There had been, Stephen believed, some terrible scenes between the father and son, and Stephen neither felt nor professed to feel any hope for the future. Barron intended himself to accompany Maurice to Riga and settle him there. Afterwards he talked of a journey to the Cape. Meanwhile the White House was shut up, and poor Theresa had come to join Stephen in the little vicarage whence the course of events in the coming year would certainly drive him out.

So much for the news he gave. As to the news he hungered for, Meynell had but crumbs to give him. To neither Stephen nor anyone else could Alice Puttenham's letters be disclosed. Meynell's lips were sealed upon her story now as they had ever been; and, however shrewdly he might guess at Stephen's guesses, he said nothing, and Stephen asked nothing on the subject.

As to Hester, he was told that she was well, though often moody and excitable; that she seemed already to have tired of the lessons and occupations she had taken up with such prodigious energy at the beginning of her stay; and that she had made violent friends with a young teacher from the *École Normale*, a refined, intelligent woman, in every way fit to be her companion; with whom on holidays she sometimes made long excursions out of Paris.

But to Meynell, poor Alice Puttenham poured out all the bitterness of her heart:

'It seems to me that the little hold I had over her, and the small affection she had for me when we arrived here, are both now less than they were. During the last week especially (the letter was dated the fourteenth of January) I have been at my wits' end how to amuse or please her. She resents being watched and managed more than ever. One feels there is a tumult in her soul to which we have no access. Her teachers complain of her temper and her caprice. And yet she dazzles and fascinates as much as ever. I suspect she doesn't sleep—she has a worn look quite unnatural at her age—but it makes her furious to be asked. Sometimes, indeed, she seems to melt towards me; the sombre look passes away; and she is melancholy and soft, with tears in her eyes now and then, which I dare not notice.

'Oh, my dear friend, I am grateful for all you tell me of the changed situation at Markborough. But, after all, the thing is done; there can be no undoing it. The lies mingled with the truth have been put down. Perhaps people are ready now to let the truth itself slip back with the lies into the darkness. But how can we—Edith and I and Hester—ever live the old life again? The old shelter, the old peace are gone. We are wanderers and pilgrims henceforward!

'As far as I know, Hester is still in complete ignorance of all that has happened. I have told her that Edith finds Tours

so economical that she prefers to stay abroad for a couple of years, and to let the Upcote house. And I have said also that when she herself is tired of Paris, I am ready to take her to Germany, and then to Italy. She laughed, as though I had said something ridiculous! One never knows her real mind. But at least I see no sign of any suspicion in her; and I am sure that she has seen no English newspaper that could have given her a clue. As to Philip Meryon, as I have told you before, I often feel a vague uneasiness; but watch as I will, I can find nothing to justify it. Oh! Richard, my heart is broken for her. A little love from her, and the whole world would change for me. But even what I once possessed these last few months seem to have taken from me!'

'The thing is done!—there can be no undoing it.'

That was the sore burden of all Meynell's thoughts, awakening in him, at times, the 'bitter craving to strike heavy blows' at he knew not what. What, indeed, could ever undo the indecency, the cruelty, the ugly revelations of these three months? The grossness of the common public, the weakness of friends, the solemn follies to which men are driven by hate or bigotry: these things might well have roused the angry laughter that lives in all quick and honest souls. But the satiric mood, when it appeared, soon vanished. He remembered the saying of Meredith concerning the spectacle of Bossuet over the dead body of Molière,—'at which the dark angels may, but men do not laugh.'

This bitterness might have festered within him but for the blessedness of Mary Elsmere's letters. She had seen the apology; she knew nothing of its causes. But she betrayed a joy that was almost too proud to know itself as joy; since what doubt could there ever have been but that right and nobleness would prevail? Catharine wrote the warmest and kindest of letters. But Mary's every word was balm, just because she knew nothing, and wrote out of the fulness of her mere faith in him, ready to let her trust take any shape he would. And though she knew nothing, she seemed by some divine instinct to understand also the pain that overshadowed the triumph; to be ready to sit silent with him before the irreparable. Day by day, as he read these letters, his heart burned within him; and Rose noted the growing restlessness. But he had heavy arrears

of parish business upon him, of correspondence, of literary work. He struggled on, the powers of mind and body flagging, till one night, when he had been a fortnight at Maudeley, Rose came to him one evening, and said with a smile that had in it just a touch of sweet mockery :

‘ My dear friend, you are doing no good here at all !—Go and see Mary ! ’

He turned upon her amazed.

‘ She has not sent for me. ’

Rose laughed out.

‘ Did you expect her to be as modern as that ? ’

He murmured :

‘ I have been waiting for a word. ’

‘ What right had you to wait ? Go and get it out of her ! Where will you stay ? ’

He gasped.

‘ There is the farm at the head of the valley. ’

‘ Telegraph to-night. ’

He thought a little—the colour flooding into his face. And then he quietly went to Rose’s writing-table and wrote his telegram.

*(To be continued.)*



*A GARDEN IN SHADWELL.*

BY THE BISHOP OF STEPNEY.

SLOWLY but surely Londoners are beginning to understand the use of the great river which makes London what it is. I am not speaking of its commercial facilities, for they have been recognised long ago. What I mean is the charm, the wonder, the unfailing interest of the great stream that rises somewhere in Gloucestershire, and hurries past Oxford, Windsor, and Hampton Court to become the river of London—ample, splendid, broad, and strong, until at last even London is left behind, and our river finds its way into the sea. Even above bridges it was for hundreds of years practically unknown. You had to turn out of the Strand and creep down narrow streets and through dark arches and stand on slippery stairs to see it. Wordsworth knew it, but only from Westminster Bridge. Dickens knew it; and the earlier chapters of 'Our Mutual Friend' give a ghastly picture of one aspect of riverside life. Penny steamers knew it, and the gentlemen who dined at Greenwich and Blackwall and threw their coppers to the poor little mudlarks wading in its slime. The Embankment, of course, was the beginning of a better knowledge. It made some miles of river-bank available for traffic. It opened out the wonder and the beauty of the Thames, and, slow as we are to find our way along new thoroughfares, and to see the grace of what lies close at hand, the Embankment has won its way to something like its proper place in the thoughts and affection of Londoners. Nothing can ever beat the Strand; and in some ways, not all, it is better than it was when Dr. Johnson loved it. Yet the Embankment runs it hard, and I am sorry for the man who either by night or by day fails to see the beauty of the Embankment. Is it best by day with its gardens, its bands in the dinner hour, its swinging lighters, its wheeling and circling gulls, its gunboat moored off the Temple?—or is it better still at night with its quivering lines of reflected light, and the flashes of red and green flung out by the electric advertisements? Anyhow it is as good as it can be; and we thank the Embankment that



has given us access to the river. But there is another access to it, another right of way and art of using, select and enviable, the privilege of the chosen few. There is the Terrace of the House of Commons. Who, we may ask, invented that? Did five-o'clock tea suggest the Terrace, or was it the Terrace that instigated five-o'clock tea? Was it the process of debate that drove men on the Terrace, or was it the Terrace that drew men away from the enchantments of debate? Be it as it may, the Terrace seems to have become an integral part of Parliamentary life, and no one is likely to grudge hard-worked members the refreshment and delight of it. You need not be a member to test its healing virtues. You may pass in fancy from a world of heated (physically of course) air and narrow (optically of course) horizons, and feel the breath of river air in your face and the stretch of wide river moving in silent strength before your eyes.

These are typical and representative instances of the river's use and delight, and they furnish matter for an obvious reflection. They make us feel the shame and pity it is to waste so much as a yard of the river frontage, and set our hearts on securing for some such purposes every bit of it that can be had.

## I.

As a matter of fact the Lower Thames (below the Tower, for instance) is even more attractive than the Westminster and Temple reaches. The shipping is more important and more various, the river widens towards the Lower Pool, and soon the Commercial Docks on the south side of the stream give wider distances and the beauty of forests of masts against the skyline. Artists have seen this clearly enough, and we have only to think of certain Academy pictures and Whistler's wonderful series of etchings to remind ourselves that this part of the river possesses an extraordinary and most appealing charm. Farther on you get the wonders of Limehouse Reach, with a very fine church tower exactly where it ought to be; and you arrive at last at the crowning point where Greenwich Hospital, the work of Wren at his very best in architectural power and most unselfish patriotism, touches the water's edge and shows you something that Venice cannot rival. There is no need to argue about it; but it may fairly be claimed that the Lower Thames is

at least as interesting and attractive as that which gives delight to the Terrace and the Embankment higher up.

I can well remember the surprise and delight expressed by my visitors from West London when, as curate-in-charge of a Mission in Poplar, I was able to lead them to Blackwall Pier, at sunset for choice, and show them the river gliding past under the mists and hazes, iridescent and glowing with that variety and subtlety of colour that London alone can show.

Why do so few people know about all this? The reason is obvious. Strange as it may seem, the river is practically inaccessible along its northern bank from the Tower to the southern extremity of the Isle of Dogs. There is no way of getting to it, and its beauty remains undiscovered. A narrowing alley may lead you down to a flight of slippery steps, or you may find your way between tall buildings to a small landing-stage with some half-blocked view up or down the stream. That is all there is; and so it happens that beauty and quiet and fresh air and a spectacle of unfailing interest are there, and no one can get at them. The procession of the river's pageant moves by unwatched.

It is a pity that this should happen anywhere; but it is a thousand pities that it should happen where it does. The north bank of the river at the point which I have attempted to describe is densely crowded with houses as poor, as dreary, as any in London. It forms part of a neighbourhood of narrow wretched streets, sunless, breathless, utterly monotonous, singularly destitute of those open spaces which even in the poorest districts of London give a touch of brightness, a chance of rest and refreshment, of recreation and fresh air, to those who live near them. Victoria Park is nearly two miles away and practically out of reach. The children play their desultory games in the dismal streets. Some of them, it is true, find their way to the riverside; and only a few weeks ago a little boy was drowned off the slippery steps in his escape from the airless and sun-scorched alleys in which so many of our poor are herded together. I am writing with a vivid recollection of a hot July; and I would ask those who in more comfortable surroundings complained of the heat to think what such weather means for the very poor. The relief of a good open space is past words to describe.

## II.

Now it happens that at the present moment there is a piece of ground of about eight acres that is practically unoccupied. It is exactly in the right place, with a river frontage of about two hundred yards and a rising bank leading into the very heart of a densely crowded neighbourhood. The only buildings on it are the deserted halls of the derelict Shadwell Fish Market—a justifiable experiment, but an experiment that failed. It is practically waste land; situated where it is, it cries out to be utilised. No man with eyes in his head can fail to see how exactly it is suited for that which is needed more than anything else in this part of the world. I venture to believe that the whole character of this dreary neighbourhood would be altered if this waste land were properly used. It is an opportunity not to be missed. Look again at the narrow streets, watch the children trying to play, the old and past work longing for a bit of quiet and repose; think of those who have worked all day in factories with the din of machinery and the weariness of monotonous toil; think of the overcrowded homes, where you are always in some one's way, or he in yours. An open space is badly wanted; and here is the very space we want. Think what could be done with it. The river is very wide here; and it is impossible to believe that the authorities of the water-way could not spare a bit of river to go with the bit of land. Why not have a floating swimming-bath, and a bit of shallow water in which children could sail their boats and even paddle! Everyone knows the strong, the sometimes fatal, attraction of the water's edge. Why not have a water's edge made safe and accessible and made what children would like to find it? Father Thames would like a game with the children, if only he were given the chance.

But no doubt the chief feature of the scheme would be the use of the frontage for a riverside terrace. Unless you live in a narrow street, your view limited by the houses opposite, you can hardly know the sheer physical pleasure of stretching your sight over a wide and unimpeded field. What a field is here! For beyond the broad stream of the river lie the ample basins of the Surrey and Commercial Docks. Your sight, instead of being jerked up short by a brick wall or an ugly hoarding, ranges free over a real distance. And there is always something to

see. Ruskin speaks of a ship as the most beautiful thing that a man can make; and here the ships will be passing almost incessantly. Oh, it's pleasant to sit in Hyde Park and see the carriages and the smart people; it's delightful to rest in Kensington Gardens and watch the children, or to stand near the Round Pond and see the model yachts; but is any of these as good as to rest by the bank of the broad river and see the brigs and barks from London Docks and the steamers and the great barges, a blaze of colour, and to get to know them, and to guess their destinations and their cargoes? The Londoner at the seaside always, if he can, secures a telescope. Often it is of a kind that hinders rather than assists vision; but he will focus it and train it on what he vaguely calls a 'vessel.' He loves a ship. And here is shipping to his heart's content. Here, or hard by, great English mariners have started on their voyages of adventure. It is a dull imagination that does not answer to the appeal of such surroundings as these.

What is the terrace to be like? I picture it broad and spacious. It must have a nice wide parapet to rest your arms on. It must have comfortable—yes, very comfortable and reposeful seats. It might well have, as the 'Spectator' suggested, a building with porches, arcades, and shelters in the middle of it, furnished perhaps with big-scale maps and great illustrations of flags and signals and riggings, and nautical things in general—for London children are keen to know all this. Open to the sunlight, open to the river breezes, it might easily be the most refreshing, the most interesting, spot in all East London—admirable for repose, for a quiet read, for a quiet pipe.

The river-bank rises here with a pleasant easy slope. What a place for a garden! It must not be too strict, too formal; not a place of prohibition or restriction. There is no need for this; for the old bad days of wilful and mischievous destruction are happily past and gone. If London children damage the country, it is rather ignorance than the love of mischief. Rare plants and flowers are not wanted; but we have seen in other parts of London real wonders of horticultural skill; and let us have here all that is rich in colour and delightful in scent.

You may or may not know the extraordinary success that attended an exhibition of flower-paintings in the Whitechapel Art Gallery. Certainly not the least interesting objects in that exhibition were the plant and flower studies which were the

actual work of the children at a school in this very neighbourhood. Love of flowers is curiously, pathetically strong amongst our poor people. Let us have plenty of flowering shrubs and perennials and annuals here—a real blaze of them. Stepney still has the tradition of famous gardens, and it is even said that roses grow there such as are not easily reared elsewhere. So let a really famous garden form part of the scheme of the Shadwell Park. Nowhere are flowers more beautiful than when you see them across water, or see water across them. The little bit of garden at the south corner of the Isle of Dogs was bright with tulips last time I saw it; and the view across tulips and the river to Greenwich Hospital was all that a man could desire.

It is the very place for such a purpose. The rising ground, open to the river, has an advantage like that of a south wall; and it would not be surprising to find that plants would grow and flourish here that would not grow in other places. Anyhow, the Shadwell Garden might easily win a character and a fame of its own; and who can estimate the value of a true beauty-spot, an oasis like this, in surroundings so monotonous and so dismal?

There ought to be, besides the garden, a playground for the children of the neighbouring streets. The details of this part of the scheme are not easy to fill in. I should like to have a referendum about it. Not to the whole electorate, nor quite to experts, but rather to the children themselves, guided in their choice by a certain number of alert and imaginative and sympathetic school masters and mistresses. I do not feel as though asphalté were quite the right thing, though I prefer that to loose gravel which grazes your knees when you come down on it. I don't want it to give any marked preference to boys or to girls in the facilities which it offers, nor must the infants nor the babies be forgotten. On the whole, it had better not be too athletic, too vigorous, too gymnastic in its suggestions. We all have a very tender place in our hearts for the children who are not vigorous, not athletic—seldom, except where railings are to be climbed, gymnastic—who nurse ragged dollies or lean kitties on doorsteps, or play little games imaginative rather than muscular, never very far away from home. The playground wants a good deal of thought; and perhaps it may be left to work itself out into the form that is really needed. It might take a worse form than that of a bit of the park, not

easily distinguishable from the rest, but with smaller seats and smaller benches, with funny friendly trees and flowers, with a fatherly good-tempered sort of park-keeper, and diminutive tables where dolls' tea-parties might be held. We ought all to have an immense pity for the feebler type of London child; and such children might well be foremost in the minds of those who shall lay out the playground of Shadwell Park.

### III.

Terrace, garden, playground! As I write the words, and conjure up the vision, I read the news of a temperature in London that breaks all records, of a death-rate amongst the children rising at a terrible rate. I am driven once more to think of the close and breathless courts, of the overcrowded rooms, of the weary and exhausted people. Only those who know the neighbourhood can really understand the blessing that a right use of this unused space would mean. Can the scheme be carried out?

Two months ago a letter was written to the 'Times' suggesting that the acquisition of this site should form part of the memorial to King Edward. It seemed then as though no other plan had really caught the fancy or stirred the imagination of those who wished to honour his memory. The St. James's Park scheme had fallen through; and though it seems to have been felt that the West End should have a statue of King Edward, there still was indecision as to its site, and certainly no great eagerness for any elaborate or grandiose design. Many people no doubt felt, and feel still, that the characteristic charm, the most vivid recollection of King Edward, would be best preserved in some simpler and less ambitious presentment. Anyhow, the suggestion, once offered, was taken up with surprising eagerness and enthusiasm. The 'Times,' the 'Telegraph,' the 'Standard,' the 'Westminster Gazette,' the 'Spectator,' the 'Saturday Review' most warmly commended it. The local clergy, the members for the borough in Parliament and on the London County Council, supported it. Delightful letters, full of goodwill and insight, came from great people in the West, and from those who have spent their lives in thinking and working for the happiness and welfare of the poor. At the beginning of August a small but most influential deputation from the House of

Commons attended the Executive Committee of the Memorial Fund to press the claims of the Shadwell site. They were most favourably received, and the Lord Mayor, as Chairman of the Committee, was asked to make inquiries as to how the site might be secured.

That is how things stand at present; and it really seems more than possible that at last this plan may be carried out, and the site of the Fish Market acquired for a memorial to the late King. Could anything be better? Was there anything that contributed more largely to his vast popularity than our knowledge of his love for his poorer subjects? Could there be any mistake about their real affection for him? A Stepney vicar took the trouble to note down, just as he heard them, a few of the things that his poor people said at the time of the King's death. It would be hard to beat them for real and genuine and heartfelt sorrow. Let the strong and delicate sympathy that linked the heart of the King to the lives of the poor live on in this East-End Memorial to him. A statue?—yes, by all manner of means; but not a statue only. There seems a sort of dissonance between a mere statue and the busy, bustling, crowded, impoverished life of the East End. Knowing the place as I do, I cannot think of a site in East London where a statue could enjoy the twofold advantage of a prominent position and of passers-by with leisure to look at it.

The East End has no 'Place' in the French sense of the word. But by all means let the Park have its statue. Let the gift recall the memory of him whom we like to regard as the giver. Somewhere there, perhaps against the green background of the rising bank, or possibly looking out over the river, let there be a statue of the King. It is not for me to prescribe its character. Only, if it be possible, let it be King Edward as the poor best knew and understood him. Need it be military? Need it wear great robes of State? Surely it need not be equestrian? Could it not be the statue of that sort of King who could watch children at play and be glad to think they were enjoying themselves; who could speak to a poor man like a brother, who could pat the head and praise the quick wit of a Paris *gamin* or a London street boy; who could lean over a hospital bed and say just the word which gave a touch of special brightness to the last hours of a hard life?



*LEX TALIONIS.*

## I.

WHILE the whole negro country of West Africa is under the influence of the false gods, there are certain spots which they more particularly favour. There they set up their temples and thence terrorise the country side, celebrate their blood-thirsty rites, and exact tribute and propitiation from a groaning people. Each of them has its powerful priesthood, which carries out the demands of the master. The weapons employed are fear, superstition, and poison, and in the course of ages a mystery has grown up round the fetishes which has caught the priests themselves in its net. In their dealings with the evil power they do acts and suffer penalties which are most surprising, because the priests must know the gods they serve are but creatures of their own imagination. One of the principal reasons why fetishism has obtained so terrible a hold over the negro is this binding of the priests by their own laws. The negro sees the greatest personages of the country suffer, and he fears accordingly. The fetish as represented by its priests is bound by its own laws and lives in danger of its own displeasure.

At Mankessim, in the colony of the Gold Coast, there was a fetish shrine of the utmost sanctity. It lay solitary in a cleared patch among very thick giant forest, and was approached by a narrow winding path. It consisted of one single building, circular, and very large. It had a very high pointed roof of beautifully prepared reeds exquisitely thatched. Its eaves projected so close to the ground that a tall man had to stoop to pass underneath. The wall was built of clay mixed with bullock's blood, kneaded until it had set hard as marble. Years of rubbing had polished it till it shone like a great red jewel. There was no window and one narrow door, but the eaves were lifted from the roof, and through the space daylight penetrated. Outside by the door was a small block of wood sheltered by pepper bushes, where night and day sat a guardian priest.

This was the home of the great fetish of Mankessim, known throughout the country side as 'The Temple of the Pots.' From

here since time began on the Gold Coast this fetish had ruled his section of West Africa. From here, in the days when the coast was unknown to the white man, its priests had enforced its laws. Its hierarchy numbered one hundred, no more, no less. Each priest had his duties; the village was in the nature of an abbey. The high priest alone entered the shrine. The ten next in rank were his assistants, his councillors, his organisers. The remainder, according to their capacity, formed the executive. Armed with the fetish's authority they went out to the furthest boundaries, collecting offerings, and punishing the slightest disobedience or disrespect. On the death of any priest, high or low, he was succeeded by his eldest nephew.

A mile away from the shrine, and immediately behind it, lay the priests' village, built of mud and grass thatched. Into it no woman, child, or stranger was allowed under any pretext to enter. Half a mile further was another village, but very much larger, the abode of the priests' families. The women and children cultivated farms and plantations, collected forest produce, and even traded with the sea towns, but though they were, through their connexion with the priests, under the immediate protection of the fetish, they were never allowed to enter the sacred village where their husbands resided.

There were other parts of the great forest also which no one was allowed to approach except the high priest and his councillors. A piece of ground rich in alluvial gold was one, a large grove of palm oil trees another, and there was a third: a small cave in a wall of rock over which a veil of creepers hung, and the lintel of which was covered with the same flaring red clay as the shrine; before the door was a deep pool of water, and in this cave the human victims of the fetish were offered up.

Such was the establishment of 'The Temple of the Pots.' One of the oldest of West African shrines, so ancient that its origin is lost and the meaning of its name forgotten.

When Christianity was introduced and the white missionaries began to lay tentative fingers on the Gold Coast, they stayed in the sea towns and sent black converts to attack the fetishes in the interior. Amongst the places they strictly avoided, however, was Mankessim. It was thought to be too powerful to be invaded. They left it and other strongholds of the false gods alone. Time went on, and the British Government got the country under some sort of police control, but it still had to wink at the doings of the

fetish of Mankessim, which snapped its fingers at both Government and missionaries. It is true it grew more cautious as the white man's power increased. The priests shed the sacrificial blood with an eye on the Government, but the sacrifices were none the less ritualistic for being carried out quietly, instead of being openly flaunted.

Shortly before Sir Garnet Wolseley, in 1874, made his attack on Ashanti, a negro kingdom hitherto forbidden to the white man, a mission, whose headquarters were at Cape Coast Castle, determined to attack the great fetish of Mankessim. A mile from the temple a river split into two. Here the ground was always muddy and broken, and in the rains a network of swamps, debarring access to the shrine—an altogether undesirable place. The mission sent up and built on the bank of one of the streams a tiny lime-washed chapel, and then they sought for a man to occupy it.

Amongst their converts they numbered a deacon whose baptismal name was Saul. He was a man forty years of age, born and bred in the shadow of fetishism, but who at his conversion, when of mature age, embraced the Christian faith with a ferocious zeal that had perpetually forced his superiors' hands and kept them and him in hot water. He admitted no drag on his haste to overthrow his former deities; he hurried so fast that he alarmed and astonished the heads of his mission. He was a firebrand that flamed, a religious desperado, and though of mean and insignificant appearance, he was a man amongst men. Had he been born in the Mankessim hierarchy, he would have raised his master to supremacy amongst all the false gods. Incidentally he would have destroyed him, for he would have forced the Government to action.

To the deacon Saul, then, the mission turned for an occupant of the dangerous pulpit at Mankessim. Few white men would have undertaken such a hazardous post, but he, the black man, the man born in idolatry, laughed to scorn the fears of his white superiors. Converts were necessary to start the mission! Then he would supply them. From amongst the many poor members and dependents of a West African family Saul chose twenty of the poorest and oldest, whose lives were of little value even to themselves. To them he promised food, shelter, and the life of the world to come. His enthusiasm was so contagious that they showed a feeble spark of his own fire when the time for departure came.

The night before they left headquarters a farewell service was held over them. They next morning set forth to what all thought

was certain death. When they had cleared the low scrub-covered sand-hills, and Cape Coast Castle was hidden from them, Saul halted them and formed them into line.

'Listen,' he said, 'for always now I am your shepherd and you are my sheep. Follow me, O sheep!'

The 'sheep' bore a few loads of coarse provisions, the roughest of native seats, and sleeping mats and clothes. They also brought with them a brass bell for the chapel, and a very big Bible. Saul led them three hard days' journey over plains and through swamp to the little white-washed chapel. There they erected a hamlet of mud and sticks, and called it Saula Kroom, that is Saul's Kroom or village. That done, they checked and stored away the provisions they had brought. The sheep in charge of the bell had fallen with it into a stream and cracked it badly against a rock, but Saul mounted it all the same. He affixed to it a rope of tie-tie and rang boldly for his first service, the bell sending out its discordant message even to the ears of the fetish priests. Saul and the members of the mission were established.

That they did not forthwith disappear at the instance of the insulted gods was due to the intense arrogance of the priests, the shadowy influence of the white man, and most especially to the insignificance of the mission. The priests stared; then jeered. They kept the little feeble band as a laughing stock. That Saul remained unharmed was due to his impotence either for good or for evil. The fetish was pleased to laugh. Still it did not want him, and if the white man had withdrawn from the country, or if he had made but a single convert, he and his mission would have disappeared.

First of all, Saul cleared and planted sufficient of the muddy ground to maintain his flock with yams and plantains, and then with a couple of assistants set out on his missionary labours. Once away from the swamp he found a great number of villages, small and large. Bible in hand he entered, and boldly preached. Then he moved on to the next village and then on again. At each halt he announced that after the preaching he would answer any questions. His first tour kept him away from Saula Kroom for three months. When he returned, he sat down to compose his first report, and at the same time to announce the complete failure of his initial effort. A few people had jeered, a few had listened; into no house had he been allowed to enter, and he had been allowed to touch no one's hand. For the three months, the thickest bush

he could find had been his bed chamber. He had not been allowed to speak to a single child. In every other way, he and his prayers, his tears and threats, had been entirely ignored. He cried bitterly as he scrawled his name at the end, and going outside his ramshackle hut, he shook his fist and hurled anathema towards the fetish shrine, and then sent one of his flock down to the sea with the report.

Time rolled on till Saul had been at his post for many years. His twenty converts were still with him. The same twenty. During all those years he had not made or lost a single one. Their wool was quite white, for the youngest was now well over fifty. The few children born to them had been sent down to headquarters to be brought up. They had built better houses, and had sufficient patches under cultivation to feed them well, and four times a year they fetched up a few boxes of stores from the sea. For the rest they did nothing but wait on Saul and expect him to look after them. Every evening, when he happened to be at Saula Kroom, they donned their miserable travesty of European clothes and shouted hymns in the chapel. They sang with such vigour that, when the breeze was right, the echo of some special favourite, such as 'Jerusalem the Golden,' even reached the ears of the priests busying themselves about their temple. They had enough to eat and little to do. The flock was contented. Saul had promised them food and protection. They received it, and stayed where they were, and had no idea that anything more could be expected of them.

But Saul grew more bitter and savage as the years passed on. The contemptuous treatment of the fetish cut him to the quick. He would far sooner have died by the worst tortures than see his religion and himself thus despised. He grew to hate his enemy with a superhuman hatred. In his peregrinations he denounced the fetish and its priests by name, with such violent and ever increasing abuse that the people ran terrified, expecting to see him stricken dead. Once he seized a little boy in the outskirts of a village, and bore him towards Saula Kroom. The child was torn from him and Saul had to flee for his life. That night his village was fired, and the more aged sheep were nearly roasted alive. Once he even gave way to such despair that he requested to be removed. But the continuance of what was grandiloquently talked of as 'The Mankessim Mission' was a pleasant surprise to his superiors. They refused his request and extolled him in reports. It seemed that

matters would continue at a deadlock till the grave closed over Saul and his troubles, or the fetish came into collision with the Government. But it was a simple matter, after all, that enabled Saul to get to close quarters with his enemy.

In the first years of his mission an only child, a son, had been born to him. His wife had died soon after, and this, his only child, had been taken down to headquarters. There he was welcomed, baptized Peter Paul, and brought up. At eighteen his education was finished and he came back to Saula Kroom. He was a handsome, well made young negro, well mannered and a good boy, and he deserved the passionate love his old father lavished on him. The day of his arrival Saul wept on his neck, and prayed over him; then put on his chapel-going clothes and rummaged from a broken box the most ancient of top hats. Radiant with pride he led the way, and presented Peter Paul to every member of the flock. Climbing the swamps he paraded him through the village of the women, and they, while sneering at the despised pastor, could not but admire the handsome young man. Then he took him to the entrance of the priests' sacred village. He did not dare to enter, but shouted down to the silent houses, that here was the youth sent by his God to carry on the work of the mission when he himself should have departed. Saul, in his pride, took his life in his hand that day, but he returned to Saula Kroom unharmed. Thenceforward he redoubled his efforts, while Peter Paul, bewildered at the life in the forest, and the strangeness of his surroundings, conceived no grudge against the fetish, but settled quietly down to cutting firewood and clearing the little farms. He accompanied his father in his futile attempts to spread the Gospel, and wherever Saul went he told the same story of the son that surely had been sent that he might triumph, though not perhaps in his own person, over the false gods.

But while Peter Paul was accustoming himself to his new life, events began to march. First the Government stationed a District Commissioner at a town on the sea some twenty miles from Mankessim, and at the same time a crisis of the utmost importance arose in the internal affairs of the great fetish of the Pots. It has been said that a fetish is bound by its own laws, and one of the very strictest of these, which the priests themselves at any inconvenience are bound to obey, relates to the succession to the priesthood. This succession is not traced from father to son, but from father to his eldest nephew born of the eldest sister, the idea being

that a man's wife may play him false and her child be none of his, but that his sister's child must have at least a moiety of pure blood in his veins.

It happened, then, at this time that the one sister of the chief priest was childless, and in consequence the very existence of the Mankessim fetish was in peril. The existence of the fetish and the existence of the high priest depended upon one another. If there was no successor to the priesthood the fetish died forthwith. The priests, great and small, divested of their power, must disperse through the country and the sacred places lie empty and forsaken, till some other fetish should seize on them, or a new fetish altogether arise in the place of the old with a new hierarchy and system. Threatened with extinction, then, the priests met in grand palaver and after an infinity of pains, traced back from oral evidence the succession to a girl who fulfilled the essential condition of being a descendant through female to female, and though collateral the inheritor of pure fetish blood, and who was further a very beautiful girl.

She lived at a large village fifty miles away, and from her origin sacred tradition attached to her. This girl the priests determined to marry forthwith to their head priest. Her son would be the legitimate successor; and her eldest daughter would be the mother of the future high priest, who would then succeed in the usual way. This girl met every requirement. She was in the succession and very beautiful, but she alone stood between the fetish and total extinction. The priests without delay went forth and back through the land, proclaiming the tidings, and stating that on such an occasion the fetish would expect the richest offerings. The people groaned and prepared to furnish them.

A fortnight after their decision, Peter Paul, who was beginning to find Saula Kroom rather dull after Cape Coast Castle, carefully washed himself one quiet evening, after working all day on the farms, and putting on his clean white drill clothes and smart red fez, went out for a solitary stroll an hour before evening chapel. It was nearing the end of March, and a heavy tornado had broken over Saula Kroom the previous day. He walked slowly, meditating on the delights of headquarters and wishing that he was back there again. The path ran through hard ground to swamp, then to hard ground and again to swamp, till it entered a thicket of huge bamboos wherein lay the water holes of the women's village. The great stems rose thick and straight as the pipes of a mighty



organ, and amongst them lay pools clear and deep. Peter Paul, with his white knickers tucked up, stumbled through the swamp, but as he reached dry ground he stopped astounded.

There stood facing him the most beautiful girl he had ever seen. She was very tall, and the sun's rays filtering through the feathery bamboo tops fell directly on her, showing up the subdued tints of olive and deepest purple in her intensely black skin. A dark blue silk cloth figured with gold enfolded her, though her neck and shoulders were bare, and a dark blue silk handkerchief covered her hair. She wore many gold bracelets and anklets. Round her beautiful neck was wound a long chain of nuggets and aggrey beads. Breeding shows among the negroes as it does among white races. The grace and dignity of this girl's pose indicated, even more than the absence of exaggeration in nose and lips, that she was of the highest class of negress. For a minute they stood silent; then Peter Paul advanced and politely raised his smart red fez.

Chapel had long been over when he reached Saula Kroom, but he only smiled at Saul's reproaches. The smelling swamps were now fragrant as a garden; the squalid mud huts, palaces; the meal of thin soup and dried plantains better than any white men's luxuries he had eaten on the coast. The country-side was no longer dull or the prospect depressing. The next evening and the next again he was at the water holes.

It was not till ten days later that Saul, on returning dog-tired and broken-hearted from a preaching trip, discovered what was going on. He happened to approach Saula Kroom through the swamp, his bare feet making no sound on the soft ground, and he came up unobserved. He saw in the lights flickering through the bamboo tops the beautiful fetish girl, and he also saw the face of his son as he bade her farewell.

Saul stole away without a word, and the cracked bell that night rang out no summons to the faithful sheep. Their pastor sat in his tumble-down hut in communion with his Maker.

His ferocious anger, his desire to slay the Christian son who had dared to tamper with the daughter of idolatry, to offer him up a sacrifice to the outraged Almighty, slowly subsided. He was a son of the soil and knew his environment. It slowly came to him, as his tremblings subsided, that here might be the answer to the prayers of twenty years. He was as shrewd as most black men. It dawned upon him that through this opening a deadly blow might

reach his sinister enemy. Tears, but this time of joy, rolled down his cheeks as he fell humbly on his knees.

There was the fact that his son was in love with the girl, and Saul thought the girl was in love with him. He had seen her face while she talked, and he knew also what prestige a young man dressed in white European clothes, with a smart red fez, would have with a girl who knew nothing of the white men; and he also knew how powerful the attraction must have been to induce her to thus elude the vigilance of the fetish priests. If, slowly reasoned Saul, the girl, influenced by her passion, could be converted, he would ask God to take him with a thankful heart. If it only resulted in the two running away together, it would at least make the great fetish the laughing-stock of the country-side. In either case, it would mean its total extinction after the death of the present high priest. There would be no heir. By its own law it must come to an end. The sole prayers and invocations that would rise up through the hot air of the swamps would come from his little chapel.

He did not fear the forces with which he tampered. With all his love for his son, his fate was a matter of secondary importance; that of the girl of no importance at all. Saul would not have hesitated any more than did Abraham to offer up his son literally as a sacrifice. But if the fetish had at the same time done the same thing, and the Government hearing of it had hanged both parties, Saul's last feeling would have been of bitter injustice. His would have been an act in God's service, the fetish's the action of a devil.

He felt quite sure of his son, and so said nothing to him, but he watched his secret meetings with the beautiful girl with most intense satisfaction. The fruit was fast ripening.

But Saul was blind. His long years of immunity had caused him to underrate an enemy infinitely more powerful than he. The fetish had been inert because of Saul's impotence, but when Peter Paul, the young Christian, began to make eyes at its chosen bride, it raised its head from its swamps.

Saul had been right. The girl was very much in love with his son, and the fetish quite realised that. It had a thousand eyes, and the chief priest sent for her. All desire for Peter Paul was dead before the interview was over. Her future husband quietly killed it once for all with a few words of dreadful menace. She had her instructions when she left. She met poor Peter Paul that night with a single purpose: to turn the tables on Saul and wipe out

the insult to her gods by stealing the boy who loved her from his faith, and so breaking his father's heart. So now Saul angled for the fetish, and the fetish angled for Saul, and the bait, Peter Paul, swam round and round in the bitter waters of religious strife impaled on the hook of love.

The tornado season was finishing and the rains approaching. Everyone, Christian and pagan, was busy on the farms. The rains set in, the sun disappeared, night and day the air was heavy with moisture. The two streams rose, overflowed, became rivers and roared down to the sea. By the time the work was done and the harvest sown, Saula Kroom stood an island in a sea of mud. Travelling was almost an impossibility; the swamps surrounded Mankessim, its shrine and villages, with an almost insuperable barrier.

Then Saul sought an interview with his son to learn from his lips that he, his only child, had cast aside his religion, and had become for the sake of the beautiful girl, an idolater and a lost soul. The dusk was falling as Peter Paul ran screaming from the hut and hid himself.

The little cracked bell called lustily. The evening grew dank and steaming. Saul looped up the creeper rope and threw open the chapel door. The sheep entered. Their pastor shut the door and drew the heavy bolt. He ascended the platform and essayed to speak, but in vain. His convulsed face terrified the sheep, and they huddled together on the benches.

'Follow me, O sheep! In the name of the Lord,' said Saul at last. Followed by his flock, he waded the swamp; the mud was knee-high, then reached almost to his middle. The noises of an African forest in the rains assailed him: the fall of the undermined big trees, the constant dropping from bough and leaf, the hurrying of waters and the shouting of frogs in their myriads. They all reached the firm ground. There the great green canopies almost hid the sky. Dusk was falling when at last they reached the sacred temple. On the way they had not met a single person, but an ancient priest, bald and half blind, was crouching in the doorway.

Saul picked him up and threw him into the pepper bushes. He pushed into the temple, followed by the bolder of the sheep. The old priest saw the wall rend and split. The thatch sagged down. The roof slipped and fell in, and the walls followed. In less than ten minutes one of the most sacred shrines in West Africa had been demolished. Amid the ruins four huge red jars stood upright and

solemn. They were eight feet in height, and ornamented with black figures of men and animals interwoven into patterns portraying scenes of hunting and war. These pots were the actual home of the great fetish of Mankessim, the pots from which the temple derived its name. They were so old that all trace of their origin had long been lost, but no living man then alive on the earth, save the high priest, had beheld them before.

The most active of the sheep seized a broken beam. The four pots, the legacy of some foreign people long ago forgotten, split into fragments. The old priest in the pepper bushes screamed unheeded. He dimly saw Saul apply fire to the fallen thatch and watched the smoke surge up into the tree tops.

At the moment there came a great shouting from the forest.

## II.

Mr. James Alexander, Commissioner of the district, was kicking off his sand-clogged boots, when the noise of the hue and cry reached him, and he ran out in alarm. From his verandah he looked towards Mankessim over a rough plain, but a mile away there was a rise in the ground. Over this he saw a crowd of men come into view. One was well in front, running and stumbling, his pursuers, keeping up a steady jog trot, were gaining on him, and all of them were shouting. He saw two of his native policemen start off at a run towards them, and, going down to his office, he awaited their arrival.

The little black pastor was brought in and set down on a chair. His trousers were in ribbons, his hat jammed over his eyes, and he could not stand. His hands and feet were bleeding, and a great scratch stretched across his face. His pursuers were in better case. Their native dress was better adapted for violent exercise, and they were mostly young.

'And I suppose,' Alexander said, when Saul had gasped out his explanation, 'those are the temple's priests. You must have run pretty hard to get away. Detain them all till to-morrow, sergeant. I have all my letters to get off now.'

He was half-way up the staircase, when the sergeant called after him.

'This black man,' said the sergeant, who was himself the colour of a coal, 'says, sah, that the fetish got his sheep shut up

in the chapel. Going to burn 'em alive oh! Chapel and all before morning, sah. Better to mention it, sah,' concluded the sergeant, unconscious of humour.

'Just as well,' said Alexander, jocularly. 'Hurry up and get the hammock ready. We must be at Saula Kroom by daylight.'

The sergeant saluted. 'To be use of, sah,' he said, 'we must get there before. These people work by night, with the day they go to their homes.'

Alexander hastily swallowed some food, and in half an hour was swinging to the groaning of the hammock men. When they tired he ran before them. There was no moon visible, and by the light of a hurricane lamp, breathless and covered with mud, they entered the pastor's village.

A large fire was burning before the chapel, and a long row of sitting figures surrounded both chapel and fire. Three priests were dancing, leaping across the flames, and from within there came the strains of a hymn. The bell was ringing wildly. A sheep had contrived to push his head between roof and wall, and was addressing the besiegers. By good fortune, Alexander had entered close to the fire, and its light shone on his white face and on the policeman's accoutrements. His interpreter shouted at the top of his voice the command of the English Government, 'Disperse and seek your homes!' but the white face backed by armed force, though sufficient for an ordinary crisis, was in this case inadequate. No one moved, and the priests continued to jump through the flames.

'Stop that bell!' Alexander shouted irritably. The bell stopped, and only the crackling of the fire broke the silence. He sought for suitable words, but found none. An aged man, the priest whom the sheep had assaulted the previous day, dragged himself into view and rose stiffly to his feet, showing the mud on his white robe. He held up above his head the upper part of one of the desecrated pots. He touched with it the chapel wall and threw it on the fire. And now nothing could have saved the sheep and the rescue party had not dawn suddenly broken. The twilight lasted but a quarter of an hour before the east grew light. Then came the sun, and with its first beams the people slipped into the forest. The prosaic daylight brought salvation, but the delay caused by Alexander's appearance had preserved the chapel until it dawned.

Alexander had no sympathy with disturbers of his district, however excellent their motives. Saul found himself and his sheep

charged with incendiarism and assault. He was not at all sorry for what he had done. An innocent vandal, he was glad to think that the antiquity of the great pots added weight to the blow he had dealt the fetish. But he writhed in agony when he realised that Peter Paul was not among the captives. He knew that he had not been at the burning of the temple, but he hoped that he had been shut up with the rest in the chapel. He dug his bitten nails into his flesh at the thought of how his life's work had miscarried. The fetish was free, while he and his sheep were in prison, the child of his old age had turned idolater, and his chapel was deserted !

He and the sheep were confined in the open yard of the prison, for there was only one small cell. That night as he lay brooding, staring at the great stars, a light shone upon him. He sprang up and paced the yard till he was heard by Ibrahim, the gaoler. Ibrahim, a gaunt Mohammedan from the Lagos hinterland, whose beaked nose and scanty chin beard were known to every ill-behaved prisoner on the Gold Coast, cared nothing for the fetish or for the white man's religion. He roughly thrust Saul back to his mat, where he lay sleepless ; and in the morning, having talked with the sheep, begged an interview with Alexander. He returned grim and taciturn.

The flock was not surprised when the prison door opened at nightfall to admit Peter Paul, handcuffed, between two policemen. The next day Peter Paul heard himself charged on his own father's information with being the instigator of the attack on the temple, and with actually laying fire to it with his own hands.

Alexander tried the case the next day. Saul denied nothing. He quoted Scripture, and the sheep obediently followed his lead. He shouted at Alexander and defied him.

The case would have been over in half an hour, save for the question of Peter Paul. It was he who now called his foes, the priests, to testify to his absence at the time of the attack, and it was his father and the sheep, supported by the priests, who hoped thus to be rid altogether of the last member of the Mission, who swore to his guilt. The evidence was overwhelming, and the bewildered Peter Paul was sentenced by Alexander to six months' hard labour, in company with his father, the rest of the flock receiving three months apiece.

The crowd streamed out of the court-house into the dusk, and the priests made their way back to Mankessim.

Saul and his flock, dressed in canvas blouses and knickers, were put to cleaning the streets. They were stiff as well as old, and it took the whole gang a week to push the two-wheeled cart in which the rubbish was taken away to the end of the town where the path ran on to the plain. Here Peter Paul, overcome by his captivity, ran away. He was near the swamp before he was caught, and Alexander thereafter kept him in solitary confinement. So Peter Paul had to spend the days by himself in the small cell, only coming out at night to sleep in the cooler air of the yard. His father's anger was hot, and he refused to speak to him. The days seemed never-ending, and the nights longer still. He had nothing to do but stare at the wall and think of the girl.

Peter Paul was alone with his sorrows.

### III.

But the news of the temple-burning and the arrest of the Christians had reached the Mission at Cape Coast, and its official head set out and paid a visit to Alexander.

A white missionary may or may not be *persona grata* to an official. It depends greatly on the official, but, on the whole, more on the missionary. This particular missionary, however, had been for many years a strong friend of Alexander's, who gave him the spare room of his quarters and made him welcome.

'I don't defend our man Saul,' said the missionary after dinner that night, 'though I feel partly to blame for leaving him so much to himself up there. I have just come down from Saula Kroom. The chapel has not been touched, but the fetish temple is up again. The Mission is gone for the time being; all the converts are in prison here.'

'I'm sorry,' said Alexander.

'No, I don't defend them. It's a wonder they weren't all murdered. But I *am* sorry for young Peter Paul. There's something wrong there, though I can't quite understand what. Saul won't confide in me, and Peter Paul is frightened of his father. That girl has given him up and Saul has disowned him. He'll have a bad time. Will you do something? He's a good boy, and you are not one of the men who say "It's only a nigger." I'm not talking about human souls,' went on the missionary, who knew his man, 'but cannot you help him?'



‘Well, I’ll do what I can. If he’s honest I might get him a berth as interpreter; but, anyway, I’ll do something.’

‘It won’t do you any harm,’ the missionary said. ‘May I see him before I go?’

‘Yes, of course, any time you like. I’m not satisfied over the business myself.’ Here the two parted never to meet again, for within a week the missionary was dead of black-water fever.

Three months slowly wore themselves out, and the sheep’s imprisonment came to an end. The day of their departure they sang ‘Jerusalem the Golden’ with feeble enthusiasm and trailed off chapelwards. With them went one of Alexander’s policemen. Peter Paul made a long scratch on the whitewashed wall, and each day he added another. Ninety, he reckoned, would set him free. Each day the burden of his captivity lightened. He knew nothing of what had happened at Mankessim. His father had not spoken a word to him since the day he had driven him from the hut. He still thought the girl was waiting for him, and would meet him on his return by the water holes. Beside that thought, his father’s cold rage, the sense of his own backsliding, the words of his friend, the white missionary, all were but nothing.

The first half of his sentence had told very heavily upon him, but with the departure of the sheep and the commencement of the last half he began to recover. Saul took to himself one side of the prison yard, and Peter Paul the other, and as they were not sent out they were put to mat-making and coconut husking. Alexander, who had not seen a white face since the visit of his friend the missionary, was almost due for leave and was making matters ready to hand over to his successor, but he had not forgotten his promise and visited Peter Paul twice daily.

Three days before the six months expired Alexander’s police spy returned safely from Mankessim. He told how the flock were sitting at Saula Kroom awaiting their shepherd, how the fetish of Mankessim had taken up its abode in a wonderfully carved stool, how its installation was to be celebrated at once by the marriage of the priest and the sacred girl, and then Alexander with a reluctance which he could not explain, sent for Peter Paul. He had, through want of companionship, become a little morbid. The death of the missionary had shaken him badly. He had seen poor Peter Paul’s demeanour as his trials drew to an end and his release approached. He had watched his face as he made the scratches on the wall, and he watched it now as he told him of his loss of the

girl. He saw enter his room a primitive creature full of life, gratitude, and expectation. He saw go out a dumb-stricken animal which the gaoler had to help down the stairs.

Alexander knew that instinct would compel Peter Paul to crawl away and hide like any other animal smitten by its death blow, and when it grew dark he visited the prison.

Peter Paul had opened the cell door and was crouching inside, his head and body covered with his sleeping-cloth, and Saul was pacing backwards and forwards by the wall. After shutting the cell door, Alexander spoke to him, telling him what had happened. He returned to his quarters and tried to dine, and then walked restlessly up and down the long verandah till close on ten o'clock. It was a very dark night, for there was no moon and the rains being not quite finished great masses of light cloud hid the stars, but it was very warm and oppressive. He sat for a long time pondering and smoking, watching the last lights from the little kerosine lamps die out in the huts of the town. It grew very late, and he rose to go to bed.

He stood yawning into the night, whose blackness was unrelieved by a single star, when a sudden and most dreadful cry arose from out the darkness beneath him. Thrice it sounded calling a short message over the sleeping town and plain, then ceased as suddenly as it had arisen. It proclaimed sorrow and horror in tones so sad and mournful that Alexander shuddered and shivered, and placed his hands over his ears to avoid hearing even its echo. He saw the lights gleam out and heard the hum of terrified voices in the frightened town. He heard the striking of matches in the servants' quarters and the hurrying of feet, and he heard the raucous voice of the police sergeant rousing his men. As he regained his self-command he realised that the cry had come from the prison. He rushed down the verandah stairs stumbling in the darkness, and striking his face against the wall, and then running from the house, threw open the prison gate. The little hand lamp on its bracket shone faintly into the darkness. It showed Saul struggling to open the door of Peter Paul's cell. Alexander pushed him violently aside and shouted for Ibrahim ; together they burst it open.

Peter Paul was hanging by the neck to the bars of the grating, quite dead, strangled with his sleeping cloth.

Alexander thrust Saul into the cell, and with Ibrahim's help took the body down and laid it in the open yard. Ibrahim, with a gentleness quite unusual to him, laid the cloth over the face.

Alexander knelt down and raised it.

'What is all this?' he asked dully.

The gaoler laughed, and Alexander remembered that for this man the fetish had no terrors.

'He was a dog,' said Ibrahim, 'but he died a man; he has his revenge. He is dead, and the girl must now die.'

'What do you mean?' said Alexander.

'This is the law of these devil-believers. If a man has an enemy he cannot reach, let him call aloud "I give myself and you my enemy to the fetish." He must call the name of himself and the enemy. Then if he kills himself so must the enemy. It is the law of the devils they worship. The fetish cannot refuse blood!'

'But this poor boy—this Peter Paul?'

"Ambah! ho! Ambah! I give myself and you to the great Fetish of Mankessim!" Thus he called. I heard him. Then he killed himself and now—stay—listen!' whispered Ibrahim.

The dim rays of the lamp flickered from the whitewashed wall. Saul's sobs echoed heavily from within the cell, but from without the walls there came a sound of rustling and brushing and deep breathing, and the pattering of bare feet.

'Come, sir,' said Ibrahim, and taking the lamp he left the prison.

The whole town seemed to have assembled, though in the darkness it was hard to tell how many were actually there. Alexander saw the king and his chiefs, and a mass of dusky faces. He saw the police, his servants, his hammockmen. His cook was swinging a big hurricane lamp, and on every face Alexander read—terror.

'They heard the cry and have come to learn the truth,' Ibrahim said. 'No one may come near either sacrifice till both are dead or he who comes will die. Their devils tell them so.'

Ibrahim jeered at the expectant crowd.

'Tell them, sir, of the death, and they will go!'

'A young man has hanged himself in the prison,' said Alexander, in a loud voice.

He stared at the people till Saul shouted from within the cell, and then he ascended his staircase.

He sat down wondering if he were awake or dreaming. The night was passing—white lines of surf began to show on the waters. He saw black shadows moving in the grey light, and knew that the people were departing, in silence as they had come. He heard footsteps, and looking up found Saul standing by his side.

Alexander tried to speak. Saul, his face wet with tears, regarded him steadily.

'My only son and the youngest sheep,' he said, 'but I give him to the Lord.'

His voice broke the spell.

'Murdered!' shouted Alexander, and seized Saul by the throat.

'Kill me, then!' said Saul, standing passive. 'Kill me, and I thank you! Listen!'

Alexander sat down, trembling. Saul told the whole story, his lifelong fight with the deadly enemy and the opportunity that had come; his use of Peter Paul, and the perjury by which he had removed him from the girl.

Saul ceased and hid his face.

'Go on,' Alexander said.

'When my son come back to-day from you and creep into the little cell, I follow him. I tell him he has lost his God, his father's love, and the girl. Then I shut the door, and in the yard I pray that the Lord will find a way to kill this evil thing from off the land. And then my son, oh, my son!'

'Then,' cried Alexander, jumping up, 'your prayer is answered, for if this girl must kill herself there will be no one to follow the high priest when he dies. The fetish finishes altogether.'

'It is true,' Saul cried, bursting into tears, 'I thank thee, oh Lord! But oh, my son! My one son!'

The candle gave a flicker and died out. The air chilled and a thousand rustlings in the fronds of the big palm trees told that the morning breeze was coming across the sea. Alexander called to Saul in the twilight. 'Here,' he said, 'is a covering. If you will give your promise not to escape you may lie down here until the day breaks.' He went into his bedroom and threw himself dressed upon the bed.

When he awoke it was broad daylight. The day was cloudy and cool, though no rain was falling. The sea looked greasy and oily, and smelt badly. It was cold, yet oppressive. A typical day in the West African rainy season. He looked at his watch. It was near ten o'clock, but his bath-tub was unfilled, and there was no smoke rising from the kitchen. He called his servant, and then the police sergeant, but no one answered. The sea was bare of canoes. The place seemed deserted. He walked along the sandy street into the market-place. No one was there. The usually busy place was quite empty. He stood still and shouted. No one

answered. The people were gone away. He returned and found Saul standing with Ibrahim by the prison door. He bowed when he saw Alexander.

'The imprisonment of this man Saul ends to-day,' said Ibrahim.

'Where are my servants? Where are the police and the people?' Alexander demanded.

'All are afraid and all are hiding,' said Saul. 'When you see them again you will know it is done. She, too, will be dead, but you and I know that my dead son lies safe with the Lord.'

Alexander opened the prison door. He and Saul wrapped the body in its sleeping-cloth. Ibrahim dug the hole in the common burial ground, and there they laid poor Peter Paul, while Saul read over him the service for the dead.

When the simple rite was finished, the three returned to the fort, and Alexander made Ibrahim fetch native food, which he shared with Saul.

'I wish you good-bye, sir,' Saul said, when they had finished. 'I return to Saula Kroom and the sheep.'

'Stay!' said Alexander, 'I will go with you. Ibrahim Ali, you will remain in charge here. If the police sergeant or the servants come back, you are still to be in charge of the fort and the house.'

He and Saul set out together for Saula Kroom. Every house that they passed was shut. In the farms and plantations the hoes and calabashes lay untouched. On the long walk they did not meet a single person, and as they talked by the way Saul opened his heart to the white man who was so far from him in thought and culture, and Alexander realised, as his dislike lessened and his admiration reluctantly increased, something of the desperate courage and tenacity of the despised little black man, who now quite alone in the world, was walking so steadfastly back to his post of danger.

They reached the swamp and crossed the muddy channels into Saula Kroom. There they were met by the sheep in their best clothes, who welcomed their pastor with hymns and meek rejoicing. In the evening Alexander attended worship in Saul's chapel. He listened drowsily in the murky heat to the old words which Saul was reading. The mosquitoes sang and droned in the roof, and he grew sleepy, for he was desperately tired. His thoughts wandered. What was he doing there—why had he come up to Saula Kroom? Surely someone should be punished over this

business, even if it were Saul, for the perjury that had helped to kill his son; surely something should be done to admit the light into these dark places, where Christianity and the fetish fought, and Ibrahim looked on contemptuous. He dozed off, and his dream took him far away. He heard the green waves splash against the steamer's bows, and he heard the whistle of the London express as she steamed out of Plymouth station. He awoke with a start to find Saul concluding his address. He was glowing with every spark of his wonted fire, and he thanked God in that, though his misfortunes had left him desolate, the enemies of his God had suffered still more.

'The way will be cleared! O Lord, I am content!' said Saul, with streaming eyes.

The next morning he and Alexander pushed through the rank vegetation along the overgrown paths to the big village of the women. It was silent and empty—not even a chicken pecked about the street. Thence they made their way, streaming with perspiration, to the priests' village; that too was deserted. They found and followed the track leading to the shrine. It had been rebuilt, and except that the red walls were dull and muddy, looked as though it had never been disturbed, but the guardian priest had gone from his seat before the door. Since leaving Saula Kroom they had met no one.

'It is done or doing,' said Saul solemnly.

A ray of pale sunlight fell on the shrine as he spoke, and Alexander stared at the red sinister building.

'In there?' he asked, staring uneasily around him.

Saul shook his head. 'No,' he answered with decision. 'Not there. The cave of sacrifice is further in the forest.'

Alexander pushed the door of the temple. It was unfastened, and he entered. The wall glowed in the dusk a dull purple. Beneath the raised roof many human skulls were ranged side by side. The floor was clean swept, and in the middle stood a large white wonderfully-carved wooden stool, and Alexander remembered what his police spy had told him of the new abiding place of the great fetish. He was seized with an irresistible idea to seat himself upon it, but the idea of so treating the gods of past ages who could still raise such grave issues struck him as out of place. He laughed hysterically and ran out of the shrine.

He and Saul sat together among the pepper bushes and ate their simple meal. The sun was beginning to decline and the

shadows to fall before they rose to return to Saula Kroom. They had not proceeded a mile when they heard a loud rustling in the forest. A long line of women with loads upon their heads suddenly emerged on to the track, and at the same moment a wood-cutter's chopper sounded from amongst the trees.

Alexander stopped and grasped Saul's arm. 'Come,' he said, 'back to the women's village.'

Where they had in the morning found nought but emptiness and silence they now found life and movement. The street was full of women and children cooking their food and chattering and laughing. The goats and chickens strolled about, and as they stared, hardly able to understand the inference, there came a sudden hush—the women stood aside with bowed heads, and a long line of priests in their curious dress strode silently through the throng on their way to their village. They did not turn their eyes to Alexander and his companion, and quickly disappeared in the forest.'

Alexander turned to Saul, the little man's eyes were bent on the ground and his hands clasped.

'It is done!' he said after a pause. He was again silent. 'The Cross shall stand above my son,' he continued, 'but her skull shall rest in the Temple.'

There was a loud jingling and a laughing, and the sound of hurrying footsteps on the path in front of them. A hammock turned the corner at a run, and Alexander found himself surrounded by his servants and carriers. His little body boy ran forward to greet him with a broad smile and many words of welcome. All were cheerful and in high spirits. No trace of the night's terror was on their faces.

'It is over!' again said Saul. 'You will find all your people back in the town now.'

Alexander stood by the hammock. 'Good-bye,' he said.

Saul took him aside and whispered.

'Why?' said Alexander. 'Out of revenge your son killed both the girl and himself. I cannot do it.'

'No,' Saul answered, trembling in his earnestness. 'I think perhaps he believed he had lost his soul and repented. I think he try when he kill her, to give her to the Lord. To save her from the fetish he kill himself, too. I ask again that you will see that the Cross stands above his grave.'

Alexander held out his hand. 'Yes,' he said. He climbed into his hammock and was hurried off to the sea.

W. H. ADAMS.



*LEAVES FROM A NOTE-BOOK IN DENMARK.*

*A GREAT PUBLISHING HOUSE.*

It was with some little excitement that I set out, in the summer of 1872, to visit for the first time the Gyldendalske Boghandel, the centre of literary activity in the country, and by far the most important publishing house in Scandinavia. As long ago as 1824 it was observed that 'the real Golden Age of the book-trade begins with Mr. Goldendale, the bookseller.' But the famous firm was old even then; it was an institution, at that remote date, which had lasted sixty years. In 1761, at a hamlet in the north of Jutland, a schoolmaster, whose name was Jens Mortensen, had a house in a green hollow called Gyldendal or Golden Dale. This was just the time when Jutlanders were giving up the patronymic system, and the schoolmaster adopted the name of this valley as his own surname, so that his eldest son should not have to go to the grammar-school at Aalborg under the plebeian title of Sören Jensen, but, sonorously and like a gentleman, as Sören Gyldendal.

It was Sören who started, in 1769, in a cautious way at first, the book-shop in Copenhagen which was called, and has continued to be called ever since, the Gyldendalske Boghandel or Gyldendal's Book-shop. In 140 years the business has been kept in the hands of four members of the firm, a continuity of possession which probably exceeds that of any publishing house in the world, except perhaps that of Longman. Sören Gyldendal flourished until 1802. His son-in-law and successor, Jacob Deichmann, reigned longer still, until 1850, and he was succeeded by the third monarch of the house, his adopted son, Frederik Hegel, who conducted the firm with brilliant energy and success until 1887, when his son, the present Mr. Jacob Hegel, took up the business. The original Gyldendal was a retail trader, a distributor of books rather than a publisher. Although a man of some learning, his views were purely commercial. The Golden Age began with Deichmann, who was a lover of literature, and a patron of it; or rather, with apologies to the wag of 1824 who has just been quoted, it was the

Silver Age which opened under Deichmann; the Golden Age it was reserved for Hegel to inaugurate.

The appetite of the Danish people for every kind of printed matter had grown with remarkable rapidity during the second half of the eighteenth century, but it was kept in some check by the severity of the Press laws. With the nineteenth century a new era of intellectual energy set in, marked, at the death of Bernstorff, by the removal of the severe restrictions on the Press. This was the moment for a bookseller of the taste and vigour of Deichmann to extend and advance his business, and he took advantage of it. But the war with England, the Napoleonic struggles on the Continent, the stagnation of European trade, the difficulty of supplying the important markets of Norway, continued to render the business of literature complicated. The season of the wonderful blossoming of classic Danish poetry was commencing—'The Gold Horns' of Oehlenschläger belongs to 1802, the earliest masterpieces of Schack-Steffeldt and of Blicher to about 1803—but in this Deichmann took little part as an inaugurator. He sold the books of the poets across his counter, and he shipped them to Jutland and to Norway, but his courage failed him when it was suggested that he should publish them. He thought dictionaries, grammars, atlases, and translations from Walter Scott a safer investment than the products of native talent, and he laid up a handsome fortune for a bolder man.

That bolder man was Frederik Hegel, one of the most liberal, enthusiastic, and far-sighted publishers that Europe has known. His ambition was to gather around the firm of Gyldendal all that was brilliant and all that was promising in the living poetry and prose of Denmark. And he had another and a still more interesting aim. He saw that Norway, which was beginning to expand in every intellectual direction, was prevented by the limitations of her commercial life from giving to the world a just impression of the treasures of her native genius. Now the Norwegian author wrote in a language not more to be distinguished from Danish than Scotch is from English. It was Hegel's idea to embrace all that was best in Norway in one common fold with the best of Denmark—to be, in short, the publisher of two living literatures. He effected this by annexing the young and highly vitalised talents of Björnson and Ibsen, to whom he could offer far better terms, a wider circulation, a

handsomer *format*, and even a swifter distribution through Norway itself, than any publisher in Christiania or Bergen was able to dream of. To the end of their days these two great writers did business exclusively with the house of Gyldendal, and all their books, so Norwegian, so national as they were, were published in Copenhagen. The other leaders of Norwegian literature followed their example, and it was almost a patriotic glory to Hegel that, as Georg Brandes said at the grave of the great publisher, he had enabled the little Denmark to subjugate the literature of so proud and so sensitive a neighbour as Norway.

In arriving at the Gyldendalske Boghandel, I was much surprised by the modesty of its appearance. It stood then in Klareboderne, a narrow and short street or passage near the centre of the city, a quiet place where the noise of the principal thoroughfares was heard faintly, like a hum. Nothing could be more insignificant than the approach, under a low arch, to the courtyard of a house so high and square that the sunlight rarely reached its lower windows. All was studiously plain; the interior like that of an old-fashioned sober bank. At the time of this my earliest visit, the genius of the place, Frederik Hegel, was absent at his country-house, Emilie Kilde, on the Sound; but I was cordially received, and shown the marvels and mysteries of the place, by August Larsen, the head clerk, from whom I had already received many courtesies, and was to be the grateful recipient of many more. Larsen had held the post, which brought him into pleasant relation with all the chief authors of his time, since 1863, and he was the most enthusiastic and the most modest of men.

When I returned to Copenhagen, in 1874, almost my earliest excursion brought me to the door of the Gyldendalske Boghandel. My main object, in so prompt a visit to the great publishing house, was to find August Larsen, and induce him to define the situation. This gentleman received me with his kind pink face twinkling with enthusiastic pleasure. The cordiality of these Danes to an unimportant exile from England was extraordinary; if I were to do it justice I should write of nothing else. But among all my correspondents there had been, and was to be, none so devoted as August Larsen. It would be a long story to draw up a list of all the kindnesses he had lavished in giving me literary intelligence, sending me new Danish books, enclosing in letters

of miraculous penmanship scraps of interest from journals and magazines—bringing, in short, my London lodgings into as close relations with the Danish world of letters as was possible. In consequence of his exceptional position, everything in the shape of a book passed under Larsen's notice. No writer of the least ambition or spirit but desired to be introduced to Copenhagen by the leading firm. What, therefore, the Gyldendalske Boghandel did not see fit to publish, it had at least had the opportunity of reading in manuscript. August Larsen did not himself write, and I do not remember that he had any literary prejudices. His attention was concentrated on the business aspect of book-making, and he did not lean much to the critical. But he was amazingly well-informed, and he had the habit of observing the literary trend of the time.

Among the earliest remarks which he dropped to me on this occasion was this: 'Georg Brandes has made immense strides since you were here. They hate him, but they cannot overlook him any longer. I think you ought to watch Brandes' production closely. All our youngest writers seem to be trotting after him, like performing dogs after the circus-man with the whip. But the big-wigs *do* hate him; and as for the clergy—well, you will see for yourself. Of course you won't repeat what I say? By the way, our Mr. Hegel will never forgive me if you go without seeing him.' The suggestion about Brandes deeply interested me. The writings of the brilliant young Jewish critic had not escaped my reading, but I had not realised the degree to which the successive volumes of that extraordinary work, 'The Main Streams in the Literature of the Nineteenth Century,' were revolutionising thought and feeling. Of this famous book, which has now penetrated into every language of Europe, and has in its turn become commonplace and a classic, the first volume had been issued just after my visit to Denmark in 1872. In 1874 it had reached its third volume, and had achieved a tumultuous reputation. Georg Brandes, though I did not yet guess it, was to be the central figure of this my second visit to Copenhagen. At that moment, however, August Larsen returned to usher me into the presence of Mr. Hegel.

The greatest then living publisher of the North, perhaps the most remarkable man connected with the book-trade whom Scandinavia has known, had that day completed his fifty-sixth year. Mr. Frederik Hegel would not suffer me to be brought

to him, but hastened out to meet me, and with the most charming politeness led me into his private office at the back of the building. This 'parlour' had played a great part in the business arrangements of Danish and Norwegian literature, and I glanced round at its handsome carved panelling, its inset paintings, its old dark solid furniture, with respect. It was doomed in a few months to be dismantled, when the firm left Klareboderne for wider and more splendid quarters. Frederik Hegel had little of the appearance of a Dane; thin, tall, tightly encased in an irreproachable frock-coat, he fulfilled my conception of a convener or a sheriff-principal. His low quiet voice had an inflexion rather Scotch than Danish. This idea of a personage very influential from the neighbourhood of Edinburgh was borne out by the smoothness of the features, the large bald brow, the high cheekbones. Frederik Hegel gave the impression of power, of justice, but almost more of patient adroitness. One felt that an angry poet, trumpeting through a mane of curls, would, in the long run, have not a single chance of worsting an opponent so quiet, smooth, and smiling. But I was not, on this first occasion, to enjoy an uninterrupted study of Hegel's conversation.

The armchair in which the publisher usually presided was now, to my surprise, occupied by a very strange figure. I was presented to Mr. Frederik Barfod, who acknowledged my bow with all the dignity of an astrologer. He had been sitting, when we entered, in a very impressive attitude, his spectacled and rather goggle eyes cast upwards in a reverie, a black skull-cap pulled down upon his brows, and one knotted hand solemnly stroking a very long and milk-white beard. It was impossible not to look round for his cauldron and his staff, so completely did he seem 'got up' to act the part of a magician. I am not betraying a confidence, I believe, when I say that Barfod was at that time one of the recognised comic characters of Copenhagen, and I was prepared for the little performance which followed. The mage's attention was with difficulty brought down to earth, and then became riveted upon me with the most disconcerting intensity. Barfod was deaf, and Mr. Hegel had to undergo a smart fire of cross-questions and crooked answers before the former came to a right consideration of who I might be and whence I came. Fortunately—for it was as good as a farce to listen to him and to draw him on—he appeared to feel

my juvenile mind just suitable for a display of the conversational fireworks for which he was so justly famous. Meanwhile Mr. Hegel sat and smiled upon us, with his long ironic lips slightly curved at the corners.

The sorcerer—for it was difficult to think of Barfod otherwise—had a very loud voice and a sententious manner, and he launched at once upon a lecture on recent Scandinavian history. He had been a busy politician in the reign of King Christian VIII., and one of the most violent of the partisans of Grundtvig. Deafness had driven him out of active affairs; and now his whole attention, diverted for a while from the frailties of the orthodox clergy, was concentrated on the dream of a triple union. Barfod had seized on the idea, first adumbrated by Ploug, that Sweden and Norway should embrace Denmark in a united Scandinavia, with one constitution, under a single monarch. There was much in this unpractical notion to make it attractive to dreamers, and in point of fact it was a good deal considered in the 'seventies. Barfod sketched, on this occasion, the familiar outline of the 'Northern Trinity,' and expatiated on the simplicity and ease with which it could be filled in. To keep the ball rolling, I asked him whether the kings, the existing dynasties, were not in the way. 'The kings?' he shouted. 'The kings? Fugh! The kings are puppets—mere puppets! We must sweep them away!' and with an oratorical gesture his large hand swept a glass of sherry over Mr. Hegel's best tablecloth. For, as I have noted, it was the publisher's birthday, and we were being regaled with cake and wine in honour of that anniversary.

Barfod held forth for nearly three-quarters of an hour, in that heated parlour, in a voice loud enough to have been heard by a hundred persons, rapping out in turn all the first platitudes about 'Nordens sjaelrige Enighed,' the ecstatic spiritual union, the tri-unity of hearts, and the rest of the Pan-Scandinavian formulas. Wherever the path of Denmark lay, I felt, it could hardly be down through these morasses of illusion. At last, I broke away gently, with finger to lip; and while Mr. Hegel pressed my hand in farewell, his expressive face was puckered with a smile, for, as I departed on tiptoe, the wizard, now entirely intoxicated with his own eloquence, still boomed away to an imaginary crowd, and kept rolling the billows of his great white head of hair.

Poul Frederik Barfod (1811-1896) was a voluminous writer, but the only work of his which is now remembered is his 'Tales from the History of the Fatherland' (1853). Of this, he was just bringing out a fourth edition, much enlarged, when I saw him in 1874. He attacked Martensen with implacable venom.

#### NIELS GADE.

From Dr. Fog's house on Gammel Strand, we looked in one direction across a canal to the Palace, in another, at right-angles, down another canal to a vista filled in the middle distance by the Holmen Church, which was at this time undergoing restoration. We used frequently to go over to see how the work was progressing. One morning, in the stonemason's yard outside the building, a short fussy personage, in a very large grey wideawake hat, was talking to a stolid workman and apparently endeavouring in vain to rouse him by argument and gesticulation. 'Ah! there is my organist,' said the Dean; 'come and be presented to him.' This was one of the few Danes connected with the arts who at that time possessed a European reputation, for it was the celebrated Professor Niels Gade who was thus designated as 'my organist.' There was, however, a special propriety in so describing him, for Gade was attached in a very peculiar way to Holmen. In 1858, being then in his forty-first year, he had been appointed its musical director; and in spite of all persuasion he preserved his connexion with it unbroken until his death in 1890. Gade's enthusiasm for this church was charming and pathetic. He knew every corner of it, was accustomed to spend long hours alone in it, and at the time of my first introduction to him was fretting himself almost into a fever with impatience at the prolonged work of restoration which excluded him from it. At the moment I am now recording, he bowed in the most perfunctory manner, and then immediately resumed an appeal, into which he drew Dr. Fog, that great care should be taken to preserve his beautiful organ, which had been built up as the apple of his eye, and was now exposed, in his opinion, to a hundred dangers and vicissitudes. I watched the illustrious composer (whose face had long been familiar in the windows of the London music-shops) with interest, and I thought myself in luck to have heard him discourse with so much vivacity on his favourite theme.



Two years later I enjoyed the honour of arresting the great composer's attention more successfully. At the service in Holmen Church, when Dean Fog preached with so marvellous an eloquence, the organ was played, as a rule, by Gade himself; and I used to observe with interest that just before the sermon began, the great composer would leave his instrument and slip into a seat in the church below. So placed, he could hear better, nor did the congregation contain a more animated listener. Although the one was no musician and the other no theologian, a very lively friendship existed between Fog and Gade. They admired each other with that absolute absence of reserve which is sometimes lacking in the mutual attitude of friends in the same profession. Fog knew nothing of music, but defied the conservatories of Europe to produce a *maestro* superior to Gade. Gade, himself no orator, believed that Fog could have given points to Demosthenes and to Bossuet. The result was in the highest degree delightful, and untouched by any species of rivalry. I have said that in 1872 I had been presented to Gade, but at a moment when his attention was vehemently engaged elsewhere. This had been one of those introductions which do not preclude a repetition of the ceremony, and Dr. Fog proposed to repeat it.

Gade, whom the King of Denmark delighted to honour, had, in consequence of his complaints of the noisy situation of his own house, been given a room high up at the back of the rambling palace of Christiansborg, where he might compose in peace and be undisturbed by visitors. He was never to be intruded upon there, and a sentry was posted below to guard the sacred piano at the point of the bayonet. Dr. Fog, however, in his calm way, found some magic word to say to this warrior, and we were admitted. This portion of the old palace seemed almost deserted, and the hollow of the staircase resounded with Gade's instrument high above us. We found him in a large airy room; a loud voice shouted 'Come in!' and there was Gade, with his back to the window, flourishing away at the piano. He welcomed his friend with geniality and me with amiable toleration. His powerful and sagacious head rippled over with grey curls as he played us this and that. He gave us specimens of a cantata called 'Zion' and other slighter things.

He was gradually induced, however, to stop playing, wheel

round on his music-stool, and, as the Dean put it to him, 'talk like a Christian and a brother.' His conversation was, I am afraid, too good for my ignorance of musical things. Gade was full of interest and curiosity about the festivals at Birmingham and the Cathedral Week at Worcester, Gloucester, and Hereford. He was pleased to be very attentive while I described what little I could remember of the performances of Bach's Passion Music in St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey. He spoke with great appreciation of the generosity and enthusiasm of English connoisseurs, and of the rare opportunities offered to foreign masters by the Philharmonic and by the Crystal Palace. He said that the temptation of England to a foreign musician was sometimes more than could be resisted, and he mentioned his own gifted pupils—the Hartvigsons, Fritz and Anton—who had left Denmark and had settled for good in England. When we rose at last to leave him he said that he had no stirrup-cup to offer us, but he would pour out some of the wine of music instead. While we descended slowly, the resonant staircase rang with melody, and I whispered to the Dean:

He pours forth the sound like enchanted wine,  
He loosens the notes in a silver shower!

We stood by the lowest stair till the last note ceased, and then the Master's large face appeared smiling at the top, and his plump hand waved down a salute to us.

Whitsuntide is largely devoted to holidays in Denmark, and I spent a long day of public festival in a very interesting and, as people say, 'rewarding' visit to Gade in his country-house at Lyngbye. The poet, Carl Andersen, and his wife took charge of me, and we were joined, on our way to the railway-station, by Hartmann—Gade's only rival among Scandinavian musicians of that age. We left the train at Klampenborg and walked across the lovely undulations of the forest westward. The weather was exquisite. A morning wind was up in the tops of the beech-trees; the sunshine spread in broad sheets of carpeting lustre over the glades, or accentuated the depth of the shadows in coppice and hollow. Whenever we turned to the east the sunlit waters of the Sound were sparkling behind us through the branches. Our journey was a long one, but Mrs. Andersen, kirtled from the dew, set us a pace that ate the miles. We were all three in glorious spirits, and the

banner of the young beech-leaf fluttered above us more in gold than green.

At length we saw before us the pleasant straggling village of Kongens Lyngbye, 'the King's Town in the Heather'—so called because there are several other Heather-Towns in the length and breadth of Zealand. Lyngbye was at that time the favourite place of *villegiatura* for such Danes as desired more privacy than the sea-road from Taarbaek to Vedbaek could give them. It was still very quiet, pastoral, and pretty, with its sequestered lake, its millstream, and its strange beacon-church, grotesquely cruciform, built on the top of the only hill in this flat part of Zealand. I am told that, after thirty-seven years, I should recognise nothing if I revisited Lyngbye, now a smart centre of civilisation; I recollect it as a mere loose holiday village, in its shirt-sleeves, smoking its long china pipe. We found the Gade family in a pleasant country villa, set in a large and rambling garden. As we approached, there escaped from the house a murmurous sound of many voices; the rooms were already crammed with visitors, but we received a most cordial welcome. Gade, his wife, her sisters, her father, her brother (the distinguished geographer, Professor Erslev), Gade's father, Gade's children by two wives, some students (friends of his eldest son), and I know not whom else, were gathered in a chattering multitude. 'The sound of them all grew like thunder,' as the poet says; and at first, as the swarm opened to let us in and gathered closely about us, I almost lost my head.

Old Mr. Søren Nielsen Gade, the composer's father, was a delightful person. He had just celebrated his eighty-fourth birthday, but appeared to be still in the prime of health. He gave the impression of having been an artisan; there was a cheery simplicity and directness about him. He immediately took me under his wing, and I was soon being told about his diamond wedding, which had taken place three years before, and how glad he was that his dear wife, who had been snatched from him since, had been spared to see that glorious anniversary. He seemed full of cheerfulness, notwithstanding this bereavement; he expatiated on his satisfaction in his son's world-wide eminence. One thing the old gentleman said remained word for word in my memory. With a finger which pointed to the great composer, now fitting, beneficent, among his guests, old Mr. Gade assured me: 'I have many things to

thank the Lord for; but, of all those about myself, I thank Him most that He has let me retain my sense of hearing so completely that when my son plays I do not miss a single chord.' I think that he had been a guitar-maker by trade. This fine old gentleman reached his eighty-sixth year, dying late in 1875.

Gade at Lyngbye was a very different person from Gade at his organ in Holmen or his piano in the palace. He was gay, *gemüthlich*, the presiding spirit of the feast. I was greatly honoured by the place at his right hand at supper, a meal which seemed to straggle through several rooms and lose itself in the twilight of a verandah. There was no formality; the ladies of the household lightened the service by their activities. My Danish was put forth to its fullest extent; I 'dressed my shop-front' with every colloquial expression I had mastered. The company were in courteous ecstasies alike at my successes and my blunders. An extremely idiomatic phrase, which I produced with *sangfroid*, in exactly the right context, enjoyed a sensational success, and everyone declared it to be wonderful that I could speak so exactly like a born Dane, while Gade himself gave a little wild laugh. I smiled a modest smile, and, being asked whether I would not begin the meal with a glass of 'snaps,' replied that 'I don't mind if I do,' *jeg kunde jo godt lide det!* This crowned my edifice, and I neglected to say that I had learned this phrase a few hours before from hearing a Dane, in a restaurant, make use of it on precisely a like occasion.

In the evening, before the light went out of the west, I had a long stroll with the great composer in his garden, which was cunningly laid out in sinuous boscages so as to appear, especially in the dimness, of very considerable size. I was astonished at the breadth of his interests; so far was he from confining his thoughts to music, that there seemed no limit to the incongruous topics among which his discourse wandered. He took my arm, and we walked slowly among the shrubberies; at the end of the garden, a bower, on a slight elevation of the ground, commanded the lake, the gardens of Sorgenfri, the wooded hollows leading north to Örholm. Here we sat for a long time when Gade was tired of walking. He said very little about himself, and I could not take the liberty of questioning him. But he dwelt on themes which I hardly expected to hear discussed in a jasmine-arbour in the heart of Zealand,

such as the influence of Marlowe upon the style of Shakespeare, the dialects of Jutland and of the island of Bornholm, the flora of the Scilly Isles, and the present state of the drama in England. I was hardly so much surprised to find him familiar with the bibliography of early English music, and a close student of our Tudor composers. He spoke of the Church music of Tallis with high admiration, and he mentioned the madrigals of John Wilbye as having had, he believed, some direct influence on his own style. I understood him to say that, at one time, he had formed a considerable collection of English music from Byrd and Tallis down to Purcell and Arne.

We started back in the darkness, but not to recross the forest. Gade, who presented me with his portrait, most kindly inscribed, accompanied us to the Lyngbye station. He was so gracious as to treat me as myself an artist, and in parting he urged on me the necessity of continuous and varied labour, without which success was impossible. He added, 'Don't be satisfied with little copies of lyrical verses. An artist—whether he be poet or musician, sculptor or painter—is known by his works *de longue haleine*.' Those wise indications were drowned, for the moment, in the almost alarming resonance of voices at the railway-station, where was gathered such a crowd as I have very rarely seen in any country or upon any occasion. For a long time we could not penetrate to the platform at all; train after train went by and seemed scarcely to relieve the congestion. It was breathed among us that the King and Queen themselves had been obliged to wait at Frederiksborg, the crowd at an earlier station having irresistibly invaded the saloon carriage reserved for their Majesties. We ourselves stood an hour and a-half on the platform before we secured three seats in a train for Copenhagen. It would have been most disagreeable if the conduct of the multitude had not been perfect; but no one was drunk or ill-tempered or rude, and those who were not grave with sleepiness still beamed with unabated good-nature.

EDMUND GOSSE.

THE BUST OF MARCEL MATHIEU.<sup>1</sup>

L'ABBÉ MATHIEU fed his silkworms and visited his bees. His peaches were ripening on the south wall. His garden was like a tight nosegay, so filled in was it with all manner of flowers. His pears and apricots were excellent. The last bottle of wine he had brought up from the cellar had the glow and the fragrance of the South in it. It was going to be a good vintage this year—if but *ces scélérats* from Paris and from Marseilles would permit it to ripen and be gathered in peace. The corn was golden-white on the long Southern slopes—if but *ces scélérats* would permit it to be reaped and threshed and ground in peace.

With his hands hidden in the wide sleeves of his rusty old cassock he came back from the bees, his old poodle, Aristide, following at his heels. *Ces scélérats!* M. l'Abbé said it to himself with a virtuous intensity. Yet—if they had but spared the King and Queen!—if they had not persecuted God and His Church! *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité!* There was that in the brave words which set the old heart to beating under the rusty cassock. After all, these Reds—of Paris and the Midi—were they not the children of the movement he had preached for and written for forty years ago?

Mathieu! It had been a name to stir the blood once. People still remembered those moving songs of the Revolution who had forgotten, if they ever knew, that Marcel Mathieu, terrified of the hurly-burly he had helped to raise, had all of a sudden retraced his steps—gone back to rest with the old Mother he had forsaken. He had abandoned, deserted, the cause of the Revolution. He himself would have said that with the years he had grown humbler and wiser—that he was frightened of the armed Revolution which had sprung up from the seeds he and such as he had sown. Up in Paris now the Revolution was devouring her children. Many of those who had dreamed fine dreams with him of how the people should be free and should rise to the height of their freedom had gone in the tumbrils to the Place de la Grève. The noblest and fairest heads had tumbled in the basket. The Gironde was a tragic memory. The King and Queen were

<sup>1</sup> Copyright, 1911, in the United States of America.

in prison awaiting the mockery of a trial. They were tearing the Constitution to rags and tatters up there in Paris. How little they could have foreseen it all when their heads were stuffed with fine dreams, and it seemed such a small matter to their inexperienced youth to pull down the world and rebuild it at their pleasure!

Marcel Mathieu! The name was quite lost in M. l'Abbé Mathieu, who made hymns now where he had made battle-songs, who was a quiet, peace-loving, snuff-taking old man, with his silkworms and bees and vegetables for his interests, beside the little flock which was so hard-working and simple and innocent that it gave its pastor no cause for anxiety. The silkworms might do badly, or foul brood come upon the hives, as it had done once or twice within the forty peaceful years. Material calamities might threaten the village. There might be a bad harvest or a bad vintage and Bois-le-Saint go pinched and hollow-cheeked till another year made up for the ill deeds of this one. There might even be illness. There had been an epidemic of low fever the winter before last; and one summer the Boulogne fever had carried off a score of children and nearly broken M. l'Abbé's heart. But the people were good always; there was very little to distress a poor priest's heart. And Mme. Du Châtel and Mlle. Clémentine at the Château des Tourelles were good to the people. They were a happy little family at Bois-le-Saint, where the years had gone by like a placid dream for M. l'Abbé.

Bois-le-Saint was out of the track of the Revolution. Buried between hills, a tiny village of some two hundred souls—the squat tower of Notre Dame de la Pitié rising amid the graves at one end, the two pointed turrets of the Château at the other end—rumours of the Revolution had only reached it faintly, from far away. M. Du Châtel, Mlle. Clémentine's brother, had been in the movement in Paris up to a point. He had thought, as Marcel Mathieu had thought forty years ago, that one might let the sea loose and chain it up at will. The day of the Flight to Varennes he had been found by the King's side. That was well. Old Mme. Du Châtel had forgiven her grandson for that much which had all but broken her heart. She lifted her head proudly now as she talked of Henri. He had been misled, the poor boy, but he had atoned for that. No one knew where he was now. He had escaped to England perhaps. Certainly he was not in the Conciergerie, nor in La Force, nor in Les Carmes, nor in L'Abbaye.



Of that Madame was assured, having yet good friends up in Paris.

As M. l'Abbé paced slowly down his garden walk, by the hollyhocks in bloom, his thoughts were much concerned with M. Henri. The young marquis was very dear to him. He had christened him; he had heard his first Confession; given him his first Communion. He had taught him his Greek and Latin and various accomplishments proper to a gentleman. He wondered whether in the teaching something had not slipped into the boy's mind from his own; whether it was not due to him that M. Henri had been a Jacobin—a leader, up to a point, of the party of the Revolution. And if so, the boy had been shocked, horrified, as he had, at the spectacle of their white lady with her garments dabbled in blood; a Mænad where they had thought to see a goddess; a Fury, drunken with the blood of nobles and saints, of the innocent and the gentle.

He did not yet know all the things that were happening in Paris, else he would have had no heart for his garden, for his bees and silkworms. So far away was he from the Terror that he could yet enjoy his game of dominoes of evenings with Mme. Du Châtel. It distracted the poor lady and kept her from thinking incessantly of Paris and M. Henri. Mlle. Clémentine too. The poor lady's *fiancé* was in La Force. Any day Marat might find him on his list of Condemned. M. le Vicomte was forty if he was a day, and had lived, as they say. Perhaps Mademoiselle had not been so very desirous of the marriage when it had been a matter of the immediate future, although she was too dutiful to set herself against Mme. la Marquise. But now—with M. le Vicomte in prison, as likely as not in the tumbrils any day that rose—Mlle. Clémentine had come to wear a proud and suffering look which told how her heart was making a hero and a martyr of her middle-aged *fiancé*.

Surely the Revolution would pass them by in the Bois-le-Saint! No one was desirous of it. Even Guilbert, the cobbler, who was suspected of being Red, was a good soul, not at all one to desire the death and plunder of those whom the will of God had placed over him. Thinking of Guilbert, M. l'Abbé smiled as he held a pinch of snuff between his finger and his thumb. Guilbert had been frugal and had bought some hectares of land. He had a bit of vineyard. The Revolution had gone too far and fast for him. He was a man of property. When he thought of a party

of Reds from Marseilles or Avignon trampling down his vines and plundering at their will, he breathed fire and fury against them, as he had been used to against the aristocrats.

The little garden, between its walls, was very warm. M. l'Abbé muttered to himself, 'Pouf!' and again 'Pouf!' as he came into the cool darkness of the white house with the green jealousies closed over the window-spaces. Something glimmered white in the gloom—yellow-white—the marble bust of himself done in Paris in the great days forty years ago. It stood between the two windows, on a pedestal, the name 'Mathieu,' cut deeply and gilt, beneath the bust.

It was like and unlike M. l'Abbé. The hair fell upon the shoulders: it was their protest in those days against the powder and periwigs which were a part of the luxury of the aristocrats. A shirt a little open at the neck. The face was smooth and young. In M. l'Abbé it had fallen into lines and wrinkles. But the expression was recognisable over forty years. The heart of a priest keeps very young. M. l'Abbé would have something of the boy in his face when he lay in his coffin.

It was almost the hour for the *déjeuner*. M. l'Abbé could hear Clairette stirring about among her pots and pans. He dropped into a chair and wiped his face with his red handkerchief. Aristide stretched himself with a sigh at his feet. It was certainly very hot. M. l'Abbé nodded. A lock of silken white hair fell forward in the middle of his forehead. It brought out his likeness to the bust as he nodded asleep.

A delicious odour from the kitchen filled the room, conflicting with the warm scents of the flowers outside. M. l'Abbé dreamt of M. Henri. They were reading together the 'Miles Gloriosus' of Plautus. A bee droned in the room, and it was summer weather. He looked affectionately at the handsome young profile. The boy's cheek was in his hand. He was reading the Latin easily and fluently. He had the making of an accomplished scholar, had M. Henri. M. l'Abbé was proud of his pupil.

Over against him as he slept there was a tall slender bookcase, the upper shelf of which contained in one corner a little sheaf of slender volumes, each tied with a ribbon, each inscribed across its cover with a name in gilt lettering, deeply tooled—'Mathieu': M. l'Abbé's poems. He had often thought that he ought to destroy them. They were the dragon's teeth that had sown the Revolution. He was not aware that up in Paris they were singing

some of his songs. Turgid stuff, M. l'Abbé thought them now; and yet had not the heart to destroy them.

He had heard the 'Marseillaise.' The thing was in the air. Somehow or other it had penetrated even to Bois-le-Saint. Only a few evenings before he had been oddly terrified, coming upon a group of babies in the dusty road, marching—their little heads, sunburnt to white, flung back, sticks on their shoulders for guns, a red rag on the flaxen curls, marching to that irresistible tune. He had felt as though the Revolution were come to Bois-le-Saint. Yet now the 'Marseillaise' was in his own dreams. The droning bee buzzed it. His fingers tapped to it on the arm of the chair.

While he slept the door of the *salon* opened and a figure slipped within—a ragged figure, with a lean and hungry face. At first the newcomer could see nothing. He stood blinking in the darkness, more blinded by it than he had been by the sun outside. Keeping his hand pressed on the door-handle, he stood and listened. There was a faint sound in the distance—something ringing, martial.

'Ah! It is the "Marseillaise!"' he said to himself, and listened, his head bent to catch the faintest sound.

As he stood, the quiet breathing of M. l'Abbé reached his ear.

'It is good,' he said to himself. He could see now. Things began to take shape out of the dimness. Aristide was fawning on his feet, licking his hands. He could see the glimmering bust, the shapes of the few articles of furniture, the crucifix on the wall.

He stooped and shook gently the old priest asleep in the arm-chair.

'I am desolated at having to waken you, Monsieur,' he said—and his voice, although tired, had a gay ring in it—'but Messieurs les Sans-Culottes will not wait. They are on their way to the Château. Having drawn blank there, they will look for me here. You must hide me, Monsieur.'

'M. Henri!' cried the old priest, coming awake with a great start. 'What is it thou art saying, *mon enfant*? That they are after thee? That I must hide thee? But where? Oh, my child, if they were to take thee I should die of it.'

'Live, Monsieur, live,' said the young man, sniffing the air. 'Why, what a delicious fragrance! *Potage à la bonne femme*, a *vol-au-vent*, I know it of old as Clairette can make it. She is a

veritable blue-ribbon. Why I have been living on the grass of the field and a little stolen fruit for days. I must feed or I must die.'

'You shall feed, my son, but you shall not die,' M. l'Abbé said, getting to his feet. 'But to hide thee! Where? Dear heavens! where is there that thou wilt be safe? The bell-tower? No; they would explore it first. The granary? I have heard how they plunged their swords into a hayrick and brought them out bloody. Let me think! Dear heavens! where am I to hide thee?'

'Give me some of the *potage à la bonne femme* first. It will save my life. Afterwards, there will be time enough to think about—saving it the second time. I am going to Clairette. Listen—there it is again. They are singing the "Marseillaise." I hope they will not frighten Mme. la Marquise, since I dare not be by her side to protect her. Listen; the sergeant who is with the Reds—Valjour—he made my boots in the good days; he is friendly because I remembered to pat the cheek of his crippled boy. He dare do nothing for me, because the others are behind him. One is easily suspected nowadays. *Ma foi!* The Revolution eats her children with an easiness! But Valjour will not be rough with Madame and Mademoiselle. They are not always so bad, the Reds. They say that even Paris is nearly filled to the lips with blood. One of these days it will be Marat's turn! The things I have seen!'

With a sudden change of mood he hid his eyes, at once gay and haggard, behind his hand.

'Ah, Monsieur!' he said brokenly. 'A week ago I saw the lovely body of Mme. la Princesse de Lamballe dragged naked through the streets, exposed to nameless insult. . . .'

For a moment he choked; then went on again: 'Oh, Freedom, what crimes are committed in thy name!' Thou and I, have we not both had our share in letting this monster loose? Those sonnets of thine, Monsieur. Why even yet they set my soul marching. Ah, there it goes again, the "Marseillaise"! And my blood must caper to it, whatever I do.'

Old Clairette had opened the door and come in quietly. She stood now in the doorway, gazing in amazement at M. l'Abbé's ragged visitor, whose hand rested on the marble bust as though he apostrophised it.

M. l'Abbé, observing her, beckoned her to come in. Two

heads were better than one—three than two; and he had often been glad to lean on Clairette's common-sense.

'It is M. Henri, Clairette!' he said—'M. Henri. He is starving, and we must hide him, because the Reds are after him. They are on their way to the Château. Where are we to hide M. Henri?'

'Why, Monsieur'—she considered—'we have not a spot here. The family-vault of the Du Châtels. But—the Reds would not spare the dead. Let me see—Ah, I have it. There is the well in the grove of the starlings. They will never discover it. M. Henri knows it.'

'Excellent!' said M. Henri, in a voice at once faint and jovial. 'I would very much prefer the grove of the starlings to the vault of the Du Châtels. Doubtless the day will come when I shall be sufficiently content there. But not yet. There is a certain lady. She is safe in England of the fogs, I am enchanted to say. For her sake I will do all I can—to say nothing of Mme. la Marquise and Mlle. Clémentine—to save my life. Oh, Clairette—thy potage—I am starving.'

He stood leaning weakly against the pedestal of the bust.

Clairette flung a strong old arm about him and helped him to a chair.

'See now, M. Henri,' she said, consoling him as though he were a child. 'My little one, be quiet. I go to fetch the potage.'

She was back in a few seconds with the good soup smoking on a tray. M. Henri ate it wolfishly; would have the *vol-au-vent* atop of it, an omelette—anything Clairette could give him. But M. l'Abbé forbade anything beyond the soup—for a little while, lest too much given to a starving man might have evil results.

While M. Henri ate the last of the soup, still with a famished eagerness, there came a sudden blare—at their ears as it seemed. Some one was banging furiously at the little green gate in the white wall, which fortunately M. Henri had bolted behind him on his entrance. Out of a silence which had been ominous there burst the roar of the 'Marseillaise.' M. Henri was caught, like a rat in a trap. There was no exit from the little white house except by the green gate. The well of the starlings, the family vault of the Du Châtels! No use to think of them now. The Reds were without, howling for M. Henri's

blood. There was no way of escape. No cover in the little house that would not yield up its secret after a few minutes of search.

Clairette had caught up her tray and basin. M. l'Abbé stood with an arm flung about M. Henri's shoulders, as though to protect him. The onslaught on the door grew more furious. And now—they had scaled the walls. They were round about the house.

'There is the chimney,' said Clairette.

'Ah, yes, there is the chimney,' said M. Henri. 'I am glad I have finished thy potage, Clairette. It makes a new man of me. If there were but time for a cigarette! Why, what a hurry they are in, these murderers! Lest I should not have time later, my love to my grandmother and Mlle. Clémentine, my undying adoration to——'

He disappeared up the chimney before he could finish the sentence; and in a second Clairette was opening the stout outer door of scrolled ironwork, which kept the house secure while it admitted fresh air, with a manner of the extreme crossness of old age.

'What a hurry you are in, Messieurs!' she grumbled, unbolting the door leisurely. 'One would think yours was the most pressing business in all the world. A pack of vagabonds, going about the country, killing innocent folk and preventing the people gathering in the harvest.'

She was swept back by the violent opening of the door and the inward rush of the Reds. They took no heed at all of the dauntless old woman, except that one sturdy fellow set her on her feet when she was all but down. They were in a merry mood apparently, having sacked a wine-shop on the way. Some were laughing and chattering, some shouting the 'Marseillaise.' They had dark Southern faces. These were not Parisians—at least for the greater part. They were some of the men who had marched from the South on Paris, singing Rouget de Lisle's immortal marching-song. With their red caps and sashes, and their swarthy Southern faces, they made a picturesque group, if one had leisure or inclination to perceive the picturesque just then.

They swarmed all over the place, laughing and shouting. Into the *salon* and the tiny *salle-à-manger*. Upstairs to the little bedrooms in the roof. Into Clairette's clean kitchen, where a dozen hands were thrust out to lift the soup-pot from the fire.

Into the garden, where the pears and apricots hung ripe on the wall.

There was no time for M. l'Abbé to do anything. He thought of the sacred vessels in the church; the locked tabernacle. Too late to do anything. 'Lord, protect Thyself!' he said, closing his old eyes. He leant an elbow on the marble bust in a momentary weakness. Then he drew himself upright. He was between the fireplace and the Reds. He said to himself that if it were necessary he would die in the place of M. Henri. Perhaps if they killed him they might be satisfied.

He opened his eyes. Why, they looked men after all, those Reds! Not monsters. The artistic perception, never dead in him, was aware of the flashing teeth, the dark eyes with the gold in the whites, the brawny figures. They were laughing and hustling each other like a crowd of rough, good-natured boys. In advance of them stood their sergeant—very unlike them—a man of cities, smaller, paler, insignificant.

'We seek the *ci-devant* Marquis Du Châtel, who is in hiding here,' he said, in a voice he tried to make big, but only resulted in making squeaky. M. l'Abbé said to himself that there was trepidation under the red sash.

'If you will not give up the *ci-devant* Marquis Du Châtel, we shall proceed to search for him,' he said. 'If my comrades are a little rough you will only have yourself to blame, M. l'Abbé.'

'Too polite, citizen!' said a voice from behind. 'Marat would not like to hear of so much politeness to one of the enemies of the people.'

The little sergeant trembled, and turned a livid face over his shoulder.

'Our sergeant does not forget,' said another voice, 'the time when he made shoes for the dainty feet of the aristocrats.'

There was a hoarse burst of laughter. Sergeant Valjour turned a greyish shade.

'Come,' he said, with an attempt at a rough manner, 'give us up the *ci-devant*. There is no time for parley. We know he is in the house.'

The crowd pushed him on from behind. M. l'Abbé had time for a wandering thought as to how Valjour came to be sergeant of a regiment of the Reds of the Midi. Poor fellow! he thought. His head was not very secure upon his shoulders.

Some one had pulled roughly at the blind, which had tumbled



to the floor. A sudden glare of light poured into the room, falling full on M. l'Abbé, where he stood by his bust. He was saying to himself now that if they stabbed him to death, which they might set about doing at any moment, the half-jocular mood of the crowd changing to one of ferocity, as with those Southerners it might happen while one said 'Pouf!'—why then his death would be an atonement for the part he had taken in letting loose the Revolution.

There was a giant of a fellow by the sergeant's elbow. He was staring hard from the bust to M. l'Abbé's face. The priest had not noticed him. The sudden change in the temper of the crowd had come. Some one had shouted from behind: 'Valjour is a traitor. Let us find the *ci-devant* for ourselves!' The knives were out in a flash. The eyes of the men had the look of the bull's eyes when he charges.

Suddenly the big fellow flung himself in front and seemed to push the mass back with his immense strength.

'Citizens! Comrades! Listen to me!' he said.

'Listen to Gaston Galant!' some one shouted from the back of the room.

'Am I one to betray the Republic?' he asked passionately. 'Why, what fools you are, Marseillais! Don't you see? Why here is our Mathieu to whose songs we march. He slipped out of the world so long ago that we thought he was dead. Listen, my children. Let us sing him his own song, "La Liberté et France." Sing, my children.'

They were upon M. l'Abbé, roaring one of those songs which he had thought to be long forgotten—he had been so long out of the world—embracing him, kissing his cheeks, all the wild fellows pushing and jostling each other to get a sight of him. The men of the Midi are poets at heart. In Paris it might have happened; but perhaps not. They were tigers in Paris then, only wanting human blood. Whereas the men of the Midi were as yet intoxicated only for freedom.

The news spread among those outside. They had discovered Marcel Mathieu living in the retirement of Bois-le-Saint, long lost to the world. And but for Citizen Gaston Galant they might have knifed their poet.

They had M. l'Abbé up on their shoulders, carrying him round his garden and through the village, shouting and singing 'Liberté et la France' and 'La Patrie' and 'Camarades, mes camarades!' Turgid things of his youth, almost forgotten, not to be

named in the same day with those elegant classical sonnets which had won the approval of the Gentlemen of the Gironde. An odd meek little figure M. l'Abbé made as he looked down on the glowing faces all upturned to his. The people came out of their cottages, timidly at first, to see the Reds go by carrying M. l'Abbé on their shoulders. Presently they joined the crowd, and swelled the shouting and the singing and the laughter.

When they had carried M. l'Abbé all round the village the Reds carried him back to his own house. Some one had twisted a wreath of laurels and laid it on the brows of the bust. M. l'Abbé was heartily glad it was not on his brows, for those children of the South were capable of everything.

They put down M. l'Abbé at his own gate; and Gaston Galant made a florid speech for his fellows, in which he expressed their joy at their discovery of the illustrious Mathieu. Since he would not return with them to Paris—M. l'Abbé shook his head violently at that—then they must only wish him a glorious peace in the retirement he had chosen. They were inconsolable because they had overrun the illustrious Mathieu's domain and pillaged his fruit-garden. The fortunes of war! Mathieu was too good a son of freedom to complain. Meanwhile he might rest assured that the village would be safe—for them. The abode of the illustrious Mathieu must ever be sacred and dear to the children of the Revolution who were fed at the fountain of his genius. And so on to the end of a most flowery oration.

Whatever the Reds might do when their passions were aroused, they sat down now with the people of Bois-le-Saint, sharing their meals, helping the women in their preparation of food, dandling the babies, teaching the boys how to shoulder a gun, telling the old people the news from Paris. When they marched out at evening they left many regrets behind among the people of Bois-le-Saint. To be sure, they were not all bad—the Reds. Their little sergeant at their head marched with the lightest step of all, shouting 'Camarades, mes camarades!' with the best of them.

Meanwhile, M. Henri, new cleansed from the soot, shaved, wearing M. l'Abbé's best cassock till more suitable garments could be procured for him, lamented the *vol-au-vent* which the Reds had snatched from his lips. A *vol-au-vent*, see you, such as Clairette made is not to be prepared in five minutes. The laurels hung withering on the bust of Marcel Mathieu. And M. l'Abbé

lamented over his broken hollyhocks and the beans and peas and aubergines trampled under the feet of the Reds. The garden would hardly recover the damage which had been done this year.

Meanwhile, who knew what the good God would bring about—next year? Peace, perhaps, and the dying down of evil passions in men's hearts. They were growing sick of Marat up in Paris. The people were recovering from their debauch of blood. Next year—who knew? M. Henri might come back. There was yet to smuggle him to the coast and get him conveyed to England. Next year could not bring back all the dear souls who were dead. But—there had been things dreadfully amiss with the old order. Marcel Mathieu would be the last to deny it. And out of evil would come good—in God's time, next year or some year.

M. l'Abbé's eyes twinkled as he took snuff and gazed with a sideways head from M. Henri, lamenting his *vol-au-vent*, to the withered laurels stuck askew on the brows of the bust. After all—those Reds—the children of the Revolution: there was much of the child left in their hearts. They were not bad, poor fellows, not at all bad. How they had looked at him as they roared his songs! For a moment his heart was uplifted with pride and something of the old spirit. Then he rebuked himself inwardly.

'You and I, M. Henri,' he said, 'we were both too confident. I blame myself with thy faults. But the poor people—there is a deal of good in the hearts of the people. We shall pray for our Reds, shall we not, M. Henri? But truly the cassock becomes thee. If it were not for Mme. La Tour . . .'

'It was truly said,' M. Henri remarked, 'that the habit does not make the monk. But, at the moment, do not ask me to pray for *ces scélérats*, Monsieur, I implore you. I think upon that *vol-au-vent*.'

KATHARINE TYNAN.

*WATERLOO AS NAPOLEON SAW IT.*

BY W. H. FITCHETT.

THE most interesting way of studying the field of Waterloo is to take the landscape in, so to speak, the order of history. It is easy to keep in memory the actual time-table of the brief campaign. Picton's regiments started from the market-place at Brussels on their march to Quatre Bras at about 3 A.M. on June 16; they reached Quatre Bras at 3.30 P.M. after a march of twenty-two miles. Halkett's brigade reached the field from Nivelles at 5.30, the Guards came up at 6.30, and the fighting died away about 9 P.M. At 10 A.M. on the 17th Wellington's infantry columns were falling back to Waterloo; his whole force was on the ridge by 6.30 P.M. The first gun at Waterloo was fired at 11.30 on the 18th; the battle practically lasted ten hours, and, by a little after 9 P.M., the French army was pouring in all tumult of flight, along the Genappe road. An interval of less than seventy hours parts the moment when the first files of Picton's Highlanders, to the tune of 'Highland Laddie,' began their march from Brussels to Quatre Bras, and the time when their worn-out survivors halted in the dusk beyond La Belle Alliance with the last of Napoleon's armies in flight before them. Into a space of time so brief was packed a drama so tremendous!

The present writer had already twice visited Waterloo; on this, his third visit, his plan was to visit the localities of the campaign in their historical order. This meant taking the market-place in Brussels as a starting-point and following the route of Picton's men to Quatre Bras. Napoleon was across the Sambre, and his strategy was, at last, clear. He was striking at the point where the Prussian and British armies touched each other. Wellington has hardly yet been forgiven—by the critics at least—for his delay in setting his troops in motion; but, to use his own words, he 'would not move a corporal's guard' till he was certain of Napoleon's plans. He paid a great price for that certainty, but at last he had it, and now his divisions were moving at speed to the threatened point.

Quatre Bras, as everyone remembers, was being held, not by

Wellington's orders, but in spite of them, and by Dutch-Belgian troops; and Picton's columns were moving at speed to their help, for Ney was attacking them with overwhelming force.

Picton's columns started while the stars were still shining. The road runs in easy gradients, and quickly plunges into the great forest of Soignies; and it must have been for the British regiments, at first, a march under easy conditions, deep with shade, cool with the freshness of dew, and, as the sunrise came, musical with the song of birds. Wellington started from Brussels at 5 A.M., and must have overtaken Picton's columns soon after they had entered the forest. The track is what is called a 'paved' road; but the word 'paved' gives an idea of smoothness which is quite misleading. The road is still, in great stretches, the actual track along which the British battalions trudged; it is constructed of rough cobble-stones, with a very harsh and uneven surface, and, towards the end of their twelve hours' march on such a road, and in 'contract' boots, Picton's footsore men must have limped painfully. The June sun, too, grew hot, and not a few stragglers must have fallen out. But far ahead could be heard sullen waves of sound—the thunder of Ney's artillery at Quatre Bras. The British were 'marching to the guns,' with Picton's fierce spirit urging them on; and we may be sure the perspiring, footsore battalions did not loiter.

By noon Mont St. Jean was reached, and the dusty columns went tramping down the long sloping road towards La Belle Alliance. They were crossing, though they knew it not, the actual field of Waterloo. It was at that moment a landscape of peace. The crops stood thick on slope and ridge; a few peasants were at work in the fields; La Haye Sainte, as they went past, was on their right, with open gates and the hum of bees from its yard, for it was a June noon. Further to their right the dark green of a wood shut, with a screen of tender foliage, round a château, whose ancient brick walls pricked with red the green of the whispering leaves. It was Hougoumont! Picton's soldiers little guessed how quickly that peaceful landscape was to be submerged beneath the red flood of battle.

The dusty columns had meanwhile climbed the low ridge beyond La Belle Alliance, and the road now dips towards Genappe. Through the centre of the little stony town flows the muddy Dyle, a thin brown trickle of water with treacherous banks. It was at that period crossed by an absurdly narrow

bridge—it was only eight feet wide—and the bridge itself was approached by streets almost as narrow and of a distracted crookedness. Picton's tired columns must have found some difficulty in getting through these twisted streets and across a bridge whose narrowness broke their files. It is easy to realise what a trap Genappe must have been to Napoleon's broken army in its flight through the darkness from Waterloo sixty hours later.

Quatre Bras at last is reached. It stands to-day very much as it did on that far-off afternoon in June, when Picton's regiments flung themselves into the fight with Ney. The cross-roads run—one north and south, from Brussels to Frasnes, from which place Ney's columns were coming up in attack; the other from Nivelles on the west, along which Halkett's brigades, and later the Guards, were to come, to Ligny on the east, where French and Prussians were already exchanging musketry volleys. The wood of Bossu has gone, but the main features of the little village and its sloping farm-lands are exactly as they were on June 16, 1815. Gemincourt, the farmhouse captured by the French, still stands at a little distance down the gentle slope across which the spectator looks. The narrow ditch where the 92nd lay runs eastward from the Brussels road, with a line of trees in its front. The fifth tree from the intersection of the roads marks the spot where, on the authority of Colonel Henderson, Wellington, pursued by the French cavalry, called on his Highlanders to 'lie still' and leaped his horse over their line. It is, looked at to-day in cold blood, a very steep and difficult jump, and the experience Wellington must have had in 'negotiating' many a stiff fence in his hunting days no doubt served him well at that moment.

Some 600 or 700 yards in advance of the cross-roads is a low and gentle undulation, green and lush to-day with young clover. It was to that ridge Picton, with the high daring so characteristic of him, took forward his regiments, pushing his way deep into the tall rye. The French Lancers rode fiercely on the red-coats. They caught the 42nd in the act of forming square, broke one of its faces, and slew its colonel. But the stubborn Scots shook themselves into shape again, and bayoneted every Frenchman that had broken into their formation. The 44th was attacked on its rear face, and its rear rank simply wheeled 'right about' and drove off the French with a close and

deadly volley. A little later, near the same spot, the 69th, while forming square to receive cavalry, was ordered by the Prince of Orange to deploy into line again. Kellerman's alert squadrons caught the unfortunate regiment in the very act of deploying and well nigh destroyed it, capturing its colours. A little to the left the Brunswick Hussars were ridden over by Ney's Cuirassiers, and a stately monument marks the spot where 'Brunswick's fated chief,' to quote Byron's phrase, was slain.

Wellington himself long afterwards told, in after-dinner gossip, a curious incident of the fight. He watched some squadrons of French Cuirassiers come charging up the Brussels road; they reached the cross-road, but the volleys of a line of infantry on their flank made them swing off to their right. A broad gateway stood open before them, and the French horse dashed through it to escape. There was no exit; that wide gate was a trap. 'To my great surprise,' said Wellington, 'on looking again ten minutes afterwards I saw them all come out at full gallop through the gateway, returning by the very road on which they had come . . . Had we thought it possible that they were still there we could have captured every one of them without fail.' And still the broad gateway stands exactly as when the impetuous French horsemen rode through it, with a vast stone-paved courtyard behind, in which the astonished Cuirassiers found themselves trapped.

To-day the spectator stands at the intersection of the roads and looks over the scene. Along that road to the left all through the hours of June 16 rolled the thunder of the guns at Ligny. Down that road on the morning of the 17th, while the stars still hung faint in the sky, Gordon with his Hussars rode to ascertain what had befallen Blücher. Six hours later a moving patch of red on that grey track was the signal for retreat to the British. The red Lancers of Napoleon's Guard were coming up.

Basil Jackson, in his 'Notes of a Staff Officer,' tells how a group of British officers—themselves little more than boys—gathered round a hastily dug grave at Quatre Bras in which lay the bodies of two of their comrades, Lord Hay and Captain Barrington. That spot can still be identified; it is on the right-hand side of the Nivelles road, a few score yards from its intersection with the Brussels road.

But we have now to retrace the road to Genappe and study it as the line of the British retreat. Wellington's cool unhurried



movements on the morning of the 17th are very interesting. Blücher had disappeared beyond the skyline; Napoleon was on his flank, Ney in his front. And yet Wellington held his position hour after hour. His infantry columns did not begin their march on the road to Genappe till 10 o'clock; his cavalry and guns maintained their front till 12 o'clock. Then, when the red Lancers of the Guard and a brigade of Cuirassiers were coming up from Ligny, Wellington's cavalry outposts were called in, and, covered by the fire of the horse-artillery, his squadrons fell back. For the British cavalry and guns it was an easy road as far as Genappe; but the skies had grown dark; furious rainstorms were gathering; Napoleon himself was riding with the foremost French guns and urging them to speed. It is easy to picture the scene at Genappe—the splashing rain, the clatter of the British squadrons through the narrow streets, the quick flash of the French guns from the slope beyond, the fierce faces of the French Lancers, crowding across the narrow bridge to overtake their foes.

Beyond Genappe is the scene of a sharp cavalry fight, when the 7th Hussars rode at the files of the French Lancers as they emerged from the main street of the little town. The Hussars, as everybody remembers, failed in their charge. The Lancers were a solid mass in the narrow street; their long lance-points formed a bar of sharp steel across it, which the Hussars, with their short swords, could not break. The Hussars fell back up the slope, the Lancers broke out of Genappe exultingly and came up in pursuit. Then the English Life Guards—big men on big horses—rode in on them. The ground lends itself to a successful cavalry charge. It is a smooth and easy descent, the turf is level with the road on either side; and it is no wonder that the French Lancers were broken and swept back in ruin to the shelter of the narrow Genappe streets.

But the British fell back; the French horsemen came on again, and this time a mounted battery with galloping horses was with them. It had struggled, gun after gun, across the narrow bridge of the Dyle, and the moment it was clear of the town it swung into line and opened fire on the British cavalry. Napoleon himself rode with that battery. He was splashed with mud, soaked with the heavy rain; but as he drew rein by the guns he urged his gunners, with furious gestures, to open fire. The last time he had trained his guns on the British was at

Toulon; and on the slope outside Genappe, with the British rear-guard in sight, he was the artillery officer of Toulon once more.

From Genappe there was practically no further pursuit of Wellington's rear-guard. The rain had turned the whole landscape into an expanse of mud and made swift movement of horses and guns impossible. The British columns kept on their leisurely way to the long low ridge at Mont St. Jean, and at 6.30 Napoleon had reached the farmhouse near La Belle Alliance, where he slept. But far into the night his weary columns—wet, hungry, and footsore—were pushing on through the darkness towards Waterloo.

The spectator lingers to-day on the little bridge across the Dyle and calls up in imagination the scenes these narrow streets have witnessed. The British retreat, with the clash of the Lancers on their rear; the tramp of the French infantry columns, under the pitiless rain and through the darkness of the night, to Waterloo. Then the tumult and terror of Napoleon's broken army in flight all through the night after the battle, with the Prussians riding and slaying in their rear. It was exactly here, in the crooked streets of Genappe, that the distraction and passion of the flight reached their climax. It was just beyond that little bridge that Napoleon leaped from his carriage to escape his Prussian pursuers. Perhaps no other six miles of road anywhere have witnessed, in a space of time so brief, such fierce alternations of victory and defeat, such an ebb and flow of pursuit and flight, as that betwixt Waterloo and Quatre Bras.

It is interesting to study the actual ground at Waterloo as Napoleon saw it, and to call up, in imagination, the stages of the great fight as he watched them. We must leave the Brussels road at a point a little south of La Belle Alliance and walk some four hundred or five hundred yards across the fields to reach the point from which Napoleon watched the long struggle. A table was brought to this spot, a map spread on it, and at this table Napoleon sat during most of the fight. Sometimes even he slept! To-day a tramway-track runs within a few score yards of the spot where Napoleon sat, but the general landscape is unchanged. We have only to dismiss, or forget, the Belgian mound—a pile of earth on the scale of the great Pyramid—and a few other details, and the whole scene is practically what it was when the mists cleared up on the morning of June 18, 1815.

The ground on which the greatest of battles was fought seems

to the modern observer very contracted. The positions held by each army are visible to the unassisted eye. The line of the ground on the British left, where Picton's regiments stood, if low, is almost level; in section it is a wave-like undulation, and when the British regiments holding it were lying down—or were withdrawn a few score yards to the reverse slope—the whole ridge must have looked naked. Nothing was visible but a few officers, tiny groups of pickets, with here and there a cluster of guns. This makes intelligible Napoleon's oft-expressed fear that Wellington did not intend to fight, but would slip off in retreat. The French line is not at right angles to the Brussels road; to the left it swept beyond Hougomont and curved round its angle. Napoleon's right was defined by a road—a mere bridle track—running towards Planchenoit, along which, a few hours later, Lobau and the Young Guard were to march to meet Blücher's columns. The roof of La Belle Alliance, it is curious to note, hides Hougomont from the observer who stands at the point where Napoleon watched the fight. Perhaps the circumstance that Napoleon could not see Hougomont helped him to forget the fight which eddied round its red brick walls for so many hours, and held engaged one whole wing of the French army. Of La Haye Sainte, Napoleon, from the point at which he stood, could see only the roof, not the garden with its solid girding walls. As a consequence he could hardly realise the defensive strength of the position held by Baring and his Germans. Close to where Napoleon stood, the soft—almost level—contour of the landscape is broken by sharply pronounced undulations. They lay directly under Napoleon's right hand; and if he had chosen, like Wellington, to conceal his men, or to fight a defensive battle, this part of his position, at least, lent itself perfectly to such tactics.

It is easy, standing where Napoleon stood, to call up a clear mental picture of the great French infantry attack. As seen from this position it had a broader front and a more menacing aspect than even as seen from the British ridge. The four great divisions—each five thousand strong—with intervals for deploying, were visible to their last file, and must have formed a majestic sight. It was a great battle-wave rising, taking shape, breaking into movement and sound—the sound of fife and drum and a tumult of human voices; a landscape of steel and of sloping muskets sweeping forward to that low green ridge that

seemed almost empty. D'Erlon's attack, in a word, as Napoleon watched it, must have seemed an overwhelming expression of battle-power. What could stop such a mass under such leaders? The slope was easy; the white road at one point had a farmhouse on one side, a sandpit, with a fringe of trees, on the other; but what resisting power could they have? Some Hanoverian troops stood—a black patch on the green slope—a little below the ridge, but they dissolved into flight before the coming French columns touched them.

As Napoleon and his staff officers watched that attack they must have felt sure of its success. All that was visible on the ridge was a thin and faint thread of red. A thread to stop a tidal wave! D'Erlon's great four-headed mass of infantry moved without pause up the slope; the left echelon swirled round La Haye Sainte; the obstinate stinging splutter of fire from the sandpit was submerged, the heads of the French columns begin, at irregular intervals, to deploy. Then Picton's slender extended line awakens! There is a far-running sparkle of musketry fire—red, deadly, repeated; pulse after pulse of flame. It seems to scorch the heads of the French columns. They halt; they are still slowly deploying. The red line on the ridge is by this time advancing; here and there is an actual sparkle of its bayonets beyond the hedge. Then comes the thunder-stroke of the British cavalry!

The low ridge is suddenly crowded with tossing horse-heads and swift-riding squadrons. They come round La Haye Sainte in glittering line and dash at speed on the French Cuirassiers, and the far-heard ring of steel on steel floats up to where Napoleon stands. Then to the left of the Life Guards come the Dragoons, beyond them the Greys, the Inniskillings; swift, sudden, spurring furiously, they crash on the masses of French infantry. The solid columns seem to crumble; they fall back down the slope under the fierce impact of the charge; they dissolve into flight. Napoleon is familiar with all the changing landscapes of battle, but he had never before looked upon a sight like that. The fierce-riding British cavalry must have flung its human spray—grey horses and red coats—almost up to the very point where Napoleon watched.

From this point, later, Napoleon watched the second great stage of the battle, the French cavalry charges; the tumult of mailed horsemen that rode up the slope betwixt Hougomont

and La Haye Sainte; the forest of brandished swords that disappeared over the British ridge and was lost to sight, while blasts of musketry volleys sent their waves of iron sound far and wide over the battlefield. Presently—disordered, wrecked, in broken flight—the French horse came back again.

The space betwixt the two horns of Wellington's defence—Hougoumont and La Haye Sainte—through which ran the track of the French charge, seems dangerously narrow, looked at from Napoleon's position, but the slope itself wears an absurdly easy aspect. It seems a gentle ascent of green turf up which a hundred squadrons might gallop at once. As a matter of fact it was steeper than it seemed, and the tall rye, the rain-sodden turf, made the going very heavy. For two hours Napoleon watched that fierce duel of horsemen with infantry, Ney drawing practically the whole of the French cavalry into his attacks. Thirteen times he led that rush of disciplined riders up the slope: and thirteen times they came back, each stern onfall ending in broken recoil. Napoleon's face must have darkened as he watched the long struggle. He exchanged angry complaints against Ney with his chief of staff. 'He is compromising us as he did at Jena,' growled Soult. 'It is a movement,' said Napoleon, 'which may produce fatal results.' But no attempt was made to stop Ney's cavalry attacks, or to support them adequately with guns and infantry.

Wellington, it will be remembered, was on horse-back during the whole of the day, constantly riding from one threatened point in his position to another; but Napoleon's methods as a commander were of a different order. He remained at one point, usually sitting at the table on which his map was spread. He never rode to his left to watch and control the fight at Hougoumont, or to his right to see for himself what the Prussian attack threatened. Apparently he only left the position he had chosen when he determined to throw the Old Guard into the fight.

It was growing dusk as Napoleon rode forward across the Brussels road; and, just where, rising from the shallow valley, the road cuts deep into the hill, he made arrangements for his last stroke at the stubborn British. Standing at this point to-day the spectator can call up a clear picture of the scene: the stern faces, the tall bearskin caps of the French veterans, Napoleon's gestures as he addressed them. Then, through the

smoke and the shadow of the coming night, the great echelons of bearskin caps moved, not directly up, but athwart, the slope, towards the British position. Then came the rolling volleys, the charge of the English Guards that wrecked the first section. Still the second section—a huge black oblong, seen dimly through the smoke—moves up. Then comes the sudden apparition of a long red line—a line edged with flame—on its flank. It is Colburn with the 52nd. Before that deadly flank stroke the Guard is broken; it is pushed across the whole British front to the Charleroi road and beyond it. As he watches the sight Napoleon whispers to himself—as if doubting what he sees—‘*La Garde recule!*’ In one tragical moment he sees his whole battle-line break.

A few hundred yards south of the point where Napoleon stood Ney rallied the last square of the Old Guard. What passions—valour, despair, flight—reached their climax at this spot! Local tradition says that here the dead lay thickest; and in the gathering darkness here was heard for the last time a deep voice commanding in French ‘Close the ranks!’ A French monument stands to-day at this point. It represents an eagle with beak and claws extended: its plumage is torn with bullets, its left wing is stretched out to the full, its right is crushed and broken. This is ingeniously contrived to be a sort of parable in bronze of the causes which explain the French defeat. The broken right wing of the eagle represents the onfall of the Prussians on the French right. But the French left was almost as much crippled by the stubborn resistance of the Coldstreams holding Hougomont, as its right wing was by the withdrawal of Lobau and the Young Guard to resist the Prussian attack.

The British position at Waterloo is sufficiently familiar and hardly needs description, though it is still profoundly interesting to walk across it from west to east, and look over the gentle slopes and shallow valley, and the roofs of La Belle Alliance as, during those long hours of battle, Wellington’s eyes must have searched them. The buildings at La Haye Sainte to-day are, in the main, modern, but the plan is exactly that of the château held by Baring and his Germans. They plainly formed a very strong post. But for the failure of ammunition suited to the rifles the Germans carried, they might have been held as successfully—they were held as stubbornly—as Hougonment itself.



The sandpit on the other side of the road—save for a ridge marking its upper side—has disappeared, but its contour can still be traced.

The cross-road running east from the Brussels road, and defining Picton's front, is exactly as it was on the day of the battle; but the famous hedge is gone. A red-roofed villa stands to-day at the extreme left of the long front held by Picton's regiments; a little back from the road, when the present writer walked along it, stood half a dozen fat hay-stacks, signs of peaceful industry on the very fields where war a century ago reaped its red harvest. The ridge is low, and, from E. to W., runs at an almost perfect level; the slope to the south up which D'Erlon's massive infantry columns came, and down which the Household Brigade charged, is perfectly easy. To the rear of the ridge still stands the windmill which finds a place in nearly all contemporary descriptions of the battle, only to-day it wears a red roof. The clay hut, too, which stood in the line of the British cavalry charge, and is referred to so often in the 'Waterloo letters,' is gone, or rather it has been transformed into respectability; a brick house stands on its site.

Close to the Brussels road are two monuments, that of Sir Alexander Gordon, the best loved and most trusted member of Wellington's staff, and that to the King's German Legion. Both monuments are perched to-day on a high earthen base; as a matter of fact this base defines the actual surface of the ridge on the day of the great fight. The whole ridge, as far as the Brussels road, was cut down ten feet in order to supply material for the vast mound on which the Belgian lion is perched. Gordon was only twenty-nine when he fell, and the epitaph on his monument is pathetic: 'An inconsolable sister and five brothers who survived him,' the inscription runs, 'raise this modest monument to the object of their dearest affections.' The four sides of the monument to 'The King's German Legion' bear long lists of the valiant dead who fell at Waterloo. 'To the memory of their companions in arms,' the inscription runs, 'who gloriously fell on the memorable day of June 18, 1815. This monument is erected by the officers of the German legion of the King.'

The sunken road which played such a part in the battle—and which, indeed, both Victor Hugo and Thiers make respon-



sible for the French defeat—is not wholly effaced, even along the centre of Wellington's position. The northern bank, down which the Life Guards rode, can still be traced. Further to the west, along the ridge above Hougoumont, the sunken road is exactly as it was on that June Sunday in 1815. It is easy to understand that it formed a very useful feature in the British defence.

The slope in front of Wellington's right centre, up which swirled Ney's thirteen cavalry charges, and up which, in the dusk of the evening, the echelons of the Old Guard came, though it is ten feet lower than in 1815, is a little more difficult than is generally supposed, or than the French cavalry leaders could have imagined, as they looked at it across the valley. A heavy horse, with a heavy man in armour on its back, galloping—or even trotting—up that long slope, thick with the tall rye and sodden and made heavy with rain, would reach the actual fighting point sadly blown, if not exhausted.

Hougoumont of course is, for the ordinary visitor, the most interesting feature in the whole battle landscape, if only because it is the one least changed. The ancient château, with its red brick walls and tiny chapel, has been preserved for show purposes for nearly a century, and the visitor sees it, in its main features, almost exactly as Macdonnell and his Coldstreams held it. The little chapel—it is only thirteen feet by seventeen feet—into which the British carried their wounded still stands, with the crucifix above the door which escaped the fire kindled by the French guns. To-day its walls are scrawled over with ignoble names, and the walls have to be periodically white-washed to efface the scribbled signatures of the unending stream of visitors. Victor Hugo found on the walls French names 'with notes of exclamations, signs of anger.' The inner orchard has an area of perhaps two hundred by one hundred yards; the outer orchard is almost twice its size. The loop-holes in the walls through which the Guards fired are plainly older than the battle; many of them carry little stone architraves. The château, it must be remembered, was built originally to resist attack. But here and there, scattered at irregular distances, are tiny loopholes torn roughly through the original bricks. They were plainly made in haste, and at points where they commanded weak places in the outer defence. These are the loop-holes made by the Guards that stern Sabbath morning nearly

a century ago. They are still black with the musketry smoke of Waterloo.

Upon those weather-beaten walls what a flame and fury of battle broke! The visitor to-day wonders how such a position could have been held successfully against the numbers flung upon it. The French left wing shut round the south-west angle of the château, and at a distance of not more than 500 to 750 yards. Reille's whole artillery—say, eighty guns—might have been concentrated on those slender brick walls and that broad, sloping roof. The French batteries were, later in the day, turned on the château and set fire to it; but, in the main, the French tried to carry Hougoumont by infantry attack. It was stupid tactics; and, against Macdonnell and his Coldstreams, no wonder it failed.

The Prussian monument stands on rising ground some 250 yards north of the little village of Planchenoit. It is an imposing mass of iron and granite, surmounted by a cross. The inscription runs 'The King and Country gratefully honour their fallen heroes. May they rest in peace. Belle Alliance June 18th, 1815.' But the monument should have stood in the village itself, for its narrow streets and old stone church witnessed the fiercest fighting on the part of the Prussians during the whole campaign. The French had in Planchenoit a stronger post, by far, than Hougoumont. The stone church itself is a citadel. On one side it could only be attacked through narrow crooked streets, opening on to a square swept by the French musketry fire. On the other side the churchyard is, practically, a deep pit, with a solid stone wall along its edge. Beyond is a wide space which the French, lying under the shelter of the wall, covered with their fire. On the further edge of this space stood, on the day of the fight, a line of low stone-gabled cottages, with passages not more than six feet wide betwixt cottage and cottage. These buildings stood 'end on' to the churchyard; and the Prussian attack had to trickle through the narrow intervals betwixt the cottages, and could never gain sufficient weight to be effective in face of the deadly fire of the French muskets. One of these cottages still stands, and helps the visitor to realise the whole scene. On neither front could the Prussians bring guns to bear on the church; the French had to be driven out with the bayonet, and at a tremendous cost. Not even on the slopes of the British position did the dead lie thicker after the

fight, than round the little stone church at Planchenoit. The stubborn Prussians well deserve the monument which to-day stands to their memory.

According to tradition the French troops which under Marshal Gerard marched during the troubles of 1832, into Belgium, broke the iron cross from the Prussian monument, and twisted the tail off the Belgian lion perched on the great mound at Waterloo. The wrong done to the tail of the lion may easily be forgiven, but the insult to the Prussian monument—if it really happened—was unpardonable.

Wellington had his headquarters on the night before Waterloo at the post-house in the village, a little distance behind the field of battle. The building stands, practically, as it did in 1815, though it is now used as a café, and wears a somewhat neglected aspect. There is still preserved the armchair in which, weary from Waterloo, Wellington sat, and the table at which he wrote his Waterloo dispatch. The bed—or rather its wooden frame—on which he slept the night before, and the night after, the battle is preserved. What dreams may have crept into the cells of his brain as he lay on that prosaic-looking bed! To its side Dr. Hume came the morning after Waterloo and woke Wellington—his face still black with the smoke of the battle—and read the list of the fallen, while tears—iron tears—rolled down the great soldier's face. Victory itself at that moment was bitter to him. The room to which Gordon was carried is next to Wellington's bedroom, the actual bed on which he died now stands beside Wellington's bed. These relics might well find some more fitting shelter than the roof of a Belgian café.

Opposite Wellington's headquarters stands the church, with its monuments to the British slain. The memorial which can be least forgiven is that to Wellington himself. It consists of a marble bust, the face wearing a simpering, inexpressive smile, not in the least suggesting the face of the captain who rode among his shot-tormented squares at Waterloo. Not the least touching of the monuments is that to Norman Ramsay, the most gallant, and the worst-rewarded, of all Wellington's soldiers. One monument bears the inscription, 'To the memory of all English officers, non-commissioned officers and soldiers who died at the battles of 16, 17, 18 June, 1815. This stone is erected by some brother soldiers and countrymen.'

Sometimes the attempted pathos of a monumental record dissolves into unconscious humour. Amongst the memorials at Waterloo is one to the leg of Lord Uxbridge. We read, carved in marble, 'Here lies buried the leg of the illustrious brave and valiant count of Uxbridge . . . who by his heroism helped the triumph of the cause of mankind, gloriously decided by the splendid victory of the same day.' On either side are other inscriptions: 'This stone was visited on 21 October, 1821, by George 4, King of England.' And further, 'This stone was visited on September 20, 1825, by the King of Prussia, Frederick 3, accompanied by his three sons.' When before in history was so much honour paid to a solitary human leg?

## THE LEAVES OF THE TREE.<sup>1</sup>

BY ARTHUR C. BENSON.

### XII.—MATTHEW ARNOLD.

It is the hardest thing in the world to recover what one really thought or felt, or even knew, about great men or great books, when one was young. Subsequent knowledge and feeling have gone on trickling down, like stalactites from the roof of a cave, blending with and penetrating the original tiny core of experience. It is so impossible to shut off all the new light, which has since intervened, from the old picture! I cannot now disentangle what the essence of my genuine admiration for Matthew Arnold, in my schooldays, was. I did not know many of his poems. The 'Forsaken Merman,' which I learnt by heart as a child, seemed to me rather silly and trivial, I am ashamed to say. I certainly had not read any of his prose works. But he was the son of Dr. Arnold, who was one of my father's heroes, and whose life I had read. In any case, I was prepared to see a great man when he came down to Eton to give his lecture on *εὐτραπεία*—'happy flexibility.' It was going to be an event, and an event it was. I can remember the dignified suavity with which he took his place, the dark head, with its rippling glossy hair, sinuously and graciously inclined, the big side-whiskers, the large expressive mouth, the grave ecclesiastical smile. The opening sentence about the philosopher Epictetus, and his complaint of the quality of the water in the bath, arrested me by its urbanity, its elaborateness; and by the sense that our instructor recognised himself to be, like the wise householder in the Gospel, bringing out of his treasury things new and old! I did not know what culture was in those days. I liked the books which amused me; I had no scheme of self-improvement, and not the smallest touch of ambition. But the whole discourse had the charm of a mysterious secret, of which our kindly and kingly lecturer had the dispensing. Something stirred and fluttered in my soul. This was not the hard and dull knowledge, like brickbats, which fell from many of our

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teachers: it was not a taste of bitter and loathsome grammatical facts, which had no connexion with each other or anything else; dreadful rules which had to be learnt, in order to play the dreary game of education. There was something harmonious and seductive about what he was telling us, a sense of living men and living ideas—where language for a moment became, not the ashes of the human rubbish-heap, but coals glowing with the fire of the heart. I do not mean that I then and thus elaborated my thought; but it was a revelation of beautiful things within reach of one's hand—living ideas, glowing images.

I felt a sense of princely condescension and of active kindness about Mr. Arnold, that he should be willing to instruct us. His utterance did not seem like persuasion, but a priestly sort of ministering of undoubted grace. The effect soon faded away; but it induced me, I remember, to read his poems, with an odd mixture of pleasure at the beauty of many of them, together with a sort of revulsion at the hard, plain, and knotty lines that lay among the richness, like the pointed kernel in the honeyed plum. One of my schoolfellows was his nephew, and I secured an autograph, not indeed of the poet himself, but of his wife, which seemed to me a precious leaf from very near the rose.

Then, at Cambridge, I fell wholly under the spell of Matthew Arnold's writings, prose and poetry alike. He seemed to be the one faultless writer; and there came a day when he delivered the Rede Lecture, in the early 'eighties, and received an LL.D. degree. I was asked as an undergraduate to the great garden-party at King's, where the Doctors all appeared robed in glory; and while I was talking to the kindly Mrs. Westcott, wife of the Bishop, I suddenly descried two figures standing together and surveying the scene—Sir Henry Maine and Mr. Arnold. One little thing struck me. Most of the Doctors were wearing their scarlet gowns and their odd flat gold-corded velvet hats with an air of obvious and fearful joy. They had become, most of them, mere lay-figures, with a foolish smiling figure-head at the top, instinct with complacent vanity. But Maine and Arnold alone appeared to wear their gowns like customary coats, each as one

That tricks his beams, and with new-spangled ore  
Flames in the forehead of the morning sky.

There was no parade about it; they shone because it was their fate to shine. I murmured a heartfelt wish to Mrs. Westcott,

who, with motherly kindness, went straight up to Mr. Arnold, I trailing in her wake, aghast at my boldness, and said, 'Mr. Arnold, here is a young man who wishes to be presented to you. You know his father—the Bishop of Truro.'

The moment was come. The great man held out his hand, said a few pleasant words about my father, and then, when I was about to retire, nodded to Sir Henry Maine, and said to me, 'Come and walk about with me a little, and point out to me some of the celebrities.' He even put his hand within my arm, and I had a few minutes of awestruck rapture, parading before the guests in a kind of gorgeous intimacy with one of the first spirits of the age. I did my best to obey his instructions, and was at last dismissed with a delightful smile, and a wish that we should meet again.

We did meet again. My father became Archbishop of Canterbury, and Mr. Arnold used to dine with us at Lambeth; I have little doubt I bored him horribly, for I contrived more than once, when the ladies left the room, to slip into a chair beside him. But his graciousness was perfect. He treated me as he might have treated the most honoured of our guests, and gave me of his best. My father had a real affection for him, not unmingled with terror. He considered him a dangerously subversive writer, but I think also thought of him as not likely to do serious harm to the cause of orthodoxy; while he loved his poetry so much and respected his sense of things ancient and beautiful so deeply that the admiration was wholly sincere. One interesting and characteristic story my father was fond of telling. He had sate next him, on the first occasion of their meeting, at the house of Mr. Charles Arnold at Rugby. Matthew Arnold had uttered some humorous semi-cynical statement, to the effect that it was useless to try to enlighten the general public, or to give them a sense of due proportion. My father was somewhat nettled, and quoted a few lines from the celebrated sermon of Dr. Arnold's on Christian Education. Matthew Arnold smiled affectionately at him, drooping his head sideways in his direction, while he patted his shoulder, and said, 'Very graceful and appropriate, my dear Benson, but we must not take for Gospel everything that dear Dr. Arnold said.'

It was incidents and sayings such as these—half-genial, half-ironical, and not really quite tactful—that gave Matthew Arnold the reputation for conscious superiority which the reality



so instantly belied. It was only necessary to be once in his presence to know, with a certainty that could never be shaken, that he was the kindest, most amiable, and most delightful of men. He was simple, humorous, sweet-tempered, and natural. Yet the tradition persistently lingers that there was something supercilious and disdainful about him. Perhaps the tone of his writings, which have been described as 'painfully kind,' like a sage pleading graciously with a stubborn and stupid child, his magnificent manner, his dramatic eyeglass, may have created this impression. He was thought to be affected and academic. Probably, too, this view of him was augmented by Mr. Mallock's delightful satire, the 'New Republic,' where Mr. Luke, who stands for Arnold, is depicted as languid, affected, and patronising. Yet his letters alone, which are really almost too homely for publication, might have disposed of this strange perversion. Even his liberal use of irony—that large, courteous, Socratic irony, which plays lambently over the type, and seldom scorches the individual—never made him unpopular; and in private life he was simply irresistible.

He was born in 1822 at Laleham, near Staines, in the great alluvial plain of the Thames. His father, Dr. Arnold, was then an unknown man, making an income by taking pupils. Two more diverse temperaments than those of father and son could hardly be selected. Dr. Arnold was earnest and strenuous, with the kind of passionate idealism that, while it inspires the enthusiastic with the same intense quality of emotion, is apt to take the heart out of more leisurely and easy-going natures. A man who could burst into tears at his own dinner-table on hearing a comparison made between St. Paul and St. John to the detriment of the latter, and beg that the subject might never be mentioned again in his presence, could never have been an *easy* companion. Dr. Arnold was a hero of men: he had a Herculean task to perform, and he performed it with marvellous courage and industry. But such a spirit flies abroad like flame, and withers where it does not ignite. It is impossible not to feel that Dr. Arnold would have regarded his son's religious writings with shame and dislike. And yet, strange to say, both father and son were attacking very much the same things and championing the same cause. Dr. Arnold hated tyranny, and had the true Protestant spirit. The son loved grace and light, and hated stupidity and conventional ineptitude. But the difficulty with such natures

as Dr. Arnold's, with their intense capacity of translating theory into practical life, with their sharply defined principles, their ardour of hope, is that they cannot concede to others more liberty than they are themselves determined to possess. Dr. Arnold's liberalism was part of a very clear theory of government and practice. He did not wish others to be free on their own lines, but upon his own. He gave his boys liberty with a generous hand, but woe betide them if they extended that liberty; they had then, in Dr. Arnold's mind, abused it. Neither had Dr. Arnold a sense of humour. The ironical attitude, the half-pathetic, half-amused contemplation of perversities and stupidities, which you can perceive, but cannot terminate, was abhorrent to him. It was a kind of cynical trifling with the urgent issues of life. There is evidence that father and son did not wholly harmonise in the school-days of the latter. But, if Dr. Arnold had lived to be an old man, it is difficult to say what would have ensued. Matthew Arnold's filial piety was so strong, he was so

decent not to fail  
In offices of tenderness,

that he would have very possibly suppressed opinions the avowal of which would have caused his father unmitigated pain. But Dr. Arnold died in 1842, when his son was an undergraduate at Balliol, and the collision never came in sight.

Matthew Arnold's Oxford career was not an entire success. He only obtained a Second Class in the final Classical Schools. But this, as in the case of Newman and Clough, was more than atoned for by an Oriel Fellowship, which was still considered the highest intellectual honour that Oxford could bestow upon a young man of promise.

He went for a time to Rugby as a master, and then became private secretary to Lord Lansdowne, who was one of those quiet imponderable personal forces in mid-Victorian politics to which history inevitably does scanty justice. Lord Lansdowne led the House of Lords, and was consulted on every matter of political importance. He was a strong Whig, at a time when Whig opinions were still on the side of progress. Whiggery now seems a disagreeable blend of privilege and democracy, combining a convenient belief in popular liberty with a still stronger belief in personal prestige. Matthew Arnold's politics, nominally

Liberal, were to the end influenced by the bias communicated to them by the serene dignity of his old chief. Yet the period of indoctrination was short enough. A political secretaryship is a fleeting thing; and within four years Matthew Arnold was appointed to an Inspectorship of Schools, a post which he held for thirty-two years.

It is natural, I think, to over-estimate the services which Matthew Arnold rendered to the cause of national education. He had, of course, a perception of the fact that if the democracy is to rule the State, the only hope is to educate the democracy up to its vote, and to give it an inkling of what political progress is. But his real concern lay with secondary education, and, though he was a kindly and sympathetic inspector, it is clear that his ideal of education was built upon the old humanistic basis. He overrated the force of classical culture, and he did not perceive that what, under earlier conditions, had been a real tincture of mental habit, was becoming, under modern conditions, a merely sentimental veneer. The modern function of education, in its civic aspect, is to initiate the youth of the country into clear conceptions of the possible reconstruction of political stability under democratic conditions. Matthew Arnold had a theoretical sympathy with the possibilities of scientific education, but his real sympathies lay with the attainment of literary culture. Hence he suffered from the inevitable backwardness of mind which befalls all those who can only meet actual difficulties, arising out of changed conditions, with a vaguely lyrical proffer of ancient complacencies. He was in favour of State supervision and publicity in education, but the result of his own and like-minded efforts was to establish a system of primary education which corresponds very little with the needs of the class educated; while secondary education, which was, and is, in urgent need of simplification and co-ordination, has been left in the hands of monopolists and traditional exponents of outworn theories. The secondary schools of England are still as much in need as ever of the qualities which Matthew Arnold endeavoured to enforce, while the effect of the type of primary education adopted has been to upset and subvert traditional class-feeling, without providing any social outlet for the type thus educated. It is useless to organise education without knowing very clearly what end is in sight. Matthew Arnold had little grasp of social eventualities. He knew clearly enough what attitude of mind he desired to

produce, and still more clearly the middle-class attitude of mind that he abhorred; but he did not grasp the fact that education must be closely adapted to the material available, and that to achieve results it is even more important to know what instincts you have to act upon than what result you would desire to attain.

Matthew Arnold was made Professor of Poetry at Oxford in 1857, and held the post for ten years. His discourses were elegant and stimulating, but made no great mark on the literary history of the period. His official life lasted until 1886; but he found time to play a considerable part in the social life of his day. He was a welcome and honoured guest in all societies; and in later life he made a lecturing tour in America, where his great ineffectiveness as a lecturer only emphasised the enthusiastic respect and admiration with which he was everywhere received.

The last time I ever saw him was in 1887, at Windermere Station. He appeared to be in the very flower and vigour of a strong and dignified age; but he died six months afterwards, from the effects of hurrying to catch a tramcar in the streets of Liverpool, at the age of sixty-five. This swift and painless close to a life full of activity and social enjoyment was but the final blessing of a naturally felicitous temperament.

As a literary critic, Matthew Arnold was fanciful and even whimsical. But this is a small matter in face of his urbanity, his exquisite taste, and his delicacy of perception. He may be said to have inaugurated, or at all events to have given prestige to, a new school of criticism. The old-fashioned *saugrenu* theory of criticism—the criticism of Lord Macaulay and the Edinburgh Reviewers—is slowly, it may thankfully be believed, dying a natural death. There were two modes of criticism extant in the earlier part of the century, and it is hard to say which is the more futile. The benevolent critic classified authors, and placed them in lists, like Tripos lists, in classes and brackets; authors had to be compared and pitted one against another. If poetry was in question, another class-list was brought out, say of elegies: Lycidas came out first, Gray's Elegy second, and so on. The stricter method was to sit in judgment, and to pronounce what was right and what was wrong. The critic was a judge, and authors were arraigned before him. If an author was approved, he was acquitted without a stain on his character; if

he was disapproved of, he was taken to task as a nuisance to society, and received a harsh and ignominious sentence, with every sort of wounding ridicule that could be heaped upon him. It was an attempt, a conscientious and complacent attempt, to establish standards; but it overlooked the fact that criticism is ultimately based upon individual opinion, and that opinion shifts its channels. The most that one can say is that, if a book approves itself to generation after generation, and satisfies both trained and untrained opinion, it probably has some quality which corresponds to an instinctive sense of beauty in the human mind. But there is no scientific standard instantly applicable in the case of contemporary work. Dr. Johnson was a shrewd and perceptive judge of certain qualities in literature, but the fact that he thought the 'Pilgrim's Progress' a stupid and barbarous book does not make Johnson a bad critic or the 'Pilgrim's Progress' a bad book. All that the most acute critic can do is to discern qualities in a writer that are likely to prove congenial to cultivated minds and hearts. It is the same with natural objects. One cannot say that the Matterhorn is a beautiful mountain and Monte Rosa an ugly mountain. What one can do is to perceive that the Matterhorn has certain arresting qualities, which for some unknown reason are likely to continue to appeal to the human imagination. When one comes to individual books, it is no more possible to explain why one is beautiful than to explain why human beings like mutton and do not care for horseflesh. All writers, all books, all poems are unique; and it seems gradually dawning upon men that the true function of criticism is only that of discerning and interpreting excellence, and that the only comparison worth making is the comparison between a writer's intention and his performance.

Matthew Arnold had strong preferences of his own. He did not care for Shakespeare, Tennyson, Shelley, Keats, or Thackeray. On the other hand, he had a taste for discovering, and for praising almost extravagantly, little literary figures of no great significance. Amiel, Joubert, the two Guérins, were figures on whom Matthew Arnold conferred a prominence which they did not wholly retain. He liked a subtle and suggestive kind of moralising; he sympathised with a melancholy outlook on the world. But in so far as he saw and felt the charm of these writers, and made others feel it, he discharged the true critical function. After all, the victory rests with the man who sees

and feels beauty, not with the man who is unaware of it. The Guérins, in their slender way, were as beautiful as the purple toadflax on the crannied wall. They were not beautiful, as the Matterhorn is beautiful; but they had a delicate quality of their own, and were perfect on a small scale. People who are touched and satisfied by the toadflax need not be scolded for not admiring the Matterhorn. It is more important to realise quality than to reverence scale. The critic who appraises is only a sort of auctioneer. The true critic is one who takes a theme, whether it be Maurice de Guérin or Shakespeare; sees its delicate outlines or its majestic curves, its sweetness or its majesty, its connexion with life and death, its truth and its sincerity; and on this theme, large or small, soft or loud, he must create something organic, that in itself is a criticism of life.

There may, of course, be people who think it valuable and instructive, and even interesting, to have books marked and classified; and, if there is a demand, there is no sort of reason why literary salesmen should not discourse in public on these lines. But Matthew Arnold was not a critic in that sense, and he was a critic in the larger sense—in that he had his eye on life and his finger on the pulse of humanity—and thus set himself to criticise the strange fruit of human utterance, which is both a part of life itself, as well as its expression and reflection.

He was a critic in his seriousness, his disinterestedness, his desire to get at the meaning and essence of it all. He had a finely trained intelligence working on systematic lines. His great maxim in criticism was this: 'I wish to decide nothing as of my own authority: the great art of criticism is to get oneself out of the way, and to let humanity decide.' There he struck a very true note. The critic is a pleader, not a judge, and still less the epitome of a jury. His business is to present the case truthfully and lucidly, but the ultimate decision lies elsewhere. Arnold struck a true note in his book, 'Culture and Anarchy,' in which his point was to prove that lawlessness in art was the lack of proper deference to the authority of cultivated persons; but even so, no deference to the individual critic can be demanded, because the individual cannot wholly discard his own preferences. Deference is due to a slowly accumulated body of cultivated opinion; and even when one has said that, one is little better off than before, because the only admiration that is worth anything is genuine admiration, and the admiration which is the

result of deference to opinion is a perfectly valueless thing. What deference ought to make men do is to give literature a fair trial, and not to decide hastily; and if one disagrees with the verdict of the ages, to conclude that it is probably oneself that is deficient, and not that the ages had no right to their opinion.

A critic who did not agree with Matthew Arnold's judgments spoke acrimoniously of Arnold's belief in the well-known preference of the Almighty for University men. The criticism was not wholly undeserved. Behind Arnold's deliberate and instinctive urbanity there lurked a well-bred contempt for the mob—for all that was loud and violent and brutal and rude. But this was not the impotent rage manifested by weakness for good-humoured strength, as by Miss Squeers for John Brodie, which is too often the attitude of the literary man. Arnold regarded the uncultivated as the lost sheep of the House of Israel. What he really did openly despise and dislike was the gross, robust, and complacent self-satisfaction of the middle-class—the Philistines, as he christened them—who despised ideas because they thought they had secured what was better worth having—a measure of material comfort. But the irony in which he indulged at their expense never made him unpopular, because he attacked, as a rule, the type, and not the individual; and when he did attack the individual, he seasoned his contempt with a deferential consciousness of his adversary's strength, and with diplomatic compliments. Even his ridicule was of a kind which ministered agreeably to his victims' vanity—to such an extent indeed that it rather confirmed them in a perversity which seemed so distinguished, than induced them to wish to alter their methods and opinions.

Arnold was thus not an appraiser of literary values, but a critic in the sense that he heightened and dignified the interest and the appreciation of art and literature; and a critic, in the larger sense, of his age, in the fact that he saw clearly its strength and its weakness, and held up his flattering mirror to its smug and comfortable visage. Perhaps his best service of all was to show that a critic can be well-bred and urbane, and that he thus does far more for the cause that he has at heart, than when his native irritability throws out malignant sparks at its contact with life, or when he vindictively punches to pieces some of the helpless and grotesque vermin of letters, in the spirit of the gardener



who hewed the toad, like Agag, to pieces, saying that he would teach it to be a toad.

It is difficult to estimate what the precise effect of Matthew Arnold's religious opinions upon contemporary thought exactly was. He was in no sense a pioneer; he rather focussed a great amount of floating opinion, and expressed with grace, force, and simplicity what a good many cultivated people were thinking. 'I thrive on religious exegesis,' he once said to a friend who inquired after his health. His religion was a literary Pantheism, with a strong tinge of Christian Idealism. He could not accept as proved the doctrine of a Personal Divinity. Unfortunately, with his relish for phrases, he invented a new and extremely unattractive formula for a very simple idea. 'The Eternal not ourselves which makes for righteousness' was in its way a formula as disagreeably definite to agnostics as the technical statements of the Athanasian Creed, without the advantage either of the familiarity which leads simple people to overlook the precise significance of clauses which have become habitual, or of the venerable and emotional associations which gather round expressions that have been consecrated by religious solemnity. The ordinary man does not want to think of the Divine principle as a sort of electricity, of which the untamed manifestations are disastrous and the subdued uses beneficial, but all the workings of which are blind and mechanical. If the mysterious force behind the frame of things has anything so definite in view as right conduct, the human mind is more than justified in using a concrete symbolism, for the simple reason that it cannot think in abstractions. A human being, with its intense consciousness of what it means by the word 'self,' can hardly be trained to think of that self as being originated by any power which is not also personal. Indeed, the evolution of consciousness from unconsciousness is an unattainable thought. Our intense sense of our right to happiness inevitably leads us to interpret the events of life as being framed to develop that happiness, and our natural optimism triumphs over unhappiness, by imagining that the disasters of life must somehow be intended to minister to ultimate content. Thus, on the constructive side, Matthew Arnold's theory must be held to have failed, because it provides no medicine for discontent and despair. If there is only a passionless force making for righteousness, if no alliance of the human will with that force is possible, then, however true the

theory may be, there is no reason for attempting passionately to embrace it. It can have no value for humanity till it is proved to be true; and if it is proved to be true, it is a very discouraging business.

But where Arnold undoubtedly did help his generation was by showing thoughtful minds that they need not necessarily abandon Christian principles and Christian hopes because they could not believe whole-heartedly in ecclesiastical title-deeds. The modern critical position with regard to the miraculous element of Scripture is not that it is necessarily untrue, but that it needs more proof than the records can possibly furnish.

Matthew Arnold's view of the Christ of the Gospel record was very much what his view would have been of St. Francis of Assisi. Anyone who reads the 'Fioretti' of St. Francis must feel perfectly sure that there is a real human being behind the record. But when the narrator says that St. Francis's head threw out flames as he prayed, and that, when an inquisitive Brother came nearer to observe the phenomenon closely, St. Francis turned round and blew him with a breath to the other end of the room, no one can be compelled to believe the statement, or to give up his belief in the actuality of St. Francis if he disbelieves it. The obvious *bona fides*, the naïve simplicity of the 'Fioretti,' do not necessitate one's adherence to the belief that St. Francis reduced by a scolding the cannibal wolf of Gubbio to an affectionate kind of lap-dog. That did not seem impossible in an unscientific age. The real marvel would have been if St. Francis's recorded life had been unattended with such reported occurrences. Of course, the difficulty is where to draw the line, but the difficulty is more theoretical than practical. Matthew Arnold's view was that in the Gospel we have the history of a character of supreme moral insight and transcendent spiritual force, and that the great and noble principles of life uttered by Jesus of Nazareth could never lose their indisputable power and truth. It was, no doubt, an intense relief to many thoughtful minds to find a man of high enthusiasm and stainless life saying frankly that no one need trouble his head about the legendary element of the Gospels, but also affirming that, on the other hand, the sayings of Christ afforded a final and ultimate standard of conduct and impulse. The mistake, he thought, was to try to deduce an ontological and dogmatic explanation of the world from sayings which com-

bined the noblest kind of enthusiasm with the clearest perception both of moral beauty and truth. It is probable that Matthew Arnold, by expressing with matchless lucidity and courage what many sincere but bewildered people were thinking, did retain in sympathy with religious ideas a great many desirous souls who had felt themselves confronted by the choice between ecclesiastical dogma and scientific materialism. He induced many semi-thoughtful people to regard the Bible with increased reverence and respect, as an inspiring manual of conduct, instead of abandoning it as an intolerable enigma. It is not, perhaps, a very living message to-day, because the type of persons to whom he gave consolation have moved into a different region, and are more interested now in problems of social reconstruction. Religious dogma has become a matter which mainly agitates denominational coteries; the words 'heresy' and 'schism' have lost their sinister consequences, and the tendency is rather to emphasise points of agreement than to ostracise points of dissidence. Indeed, it is almost impossible to reconstruct, even in imagination, the susceptibilities which broke out into flame over 'Essays and Reviews.' And it may be said generally that Matthew Arnold helped his generation in the direction of clearness of thought, of facing problems sincerely and without irritability, and away from the peculiarly ecclesiastical product which confuses muddle with mystery, and supposes that the blessing given by the Saviour to St. Thomas was a blessing on credulity, rather than a tender warning against materialistic self-sufficiency.

The books which people write are interesting, I believe, in so far as they represent their tastes rather than their ambitions. The latter books have generally some pretentious emphasis, which is of rhetoric, not of nature, or some subtle suppression of opinion which makes the fabric insecure. The weakness of such books is that they are written to impress the world; and people who desire to impress the world generally judge it harshly or meanly, perhaps because they suspect that their triumph implies the world's gullibility. Few poets, God be praised, have ever written in that spirit, even though they may yield to complacency afterwards. Matthew Arnold's poems were certainly not written from that point of view. He published both his first volumes, 'The Strayed Reveller' (1849) and 'Empedocles on Etna' (1852) under the single initial 'A.' Both books fell so flat that

they were withdrawn from circulation after a few copies had been sold. If he had lived entirely for ambition, that would have been a sharp lesson. I do not intend here to give a critical appreciation of the poems, except in so far as they illustrate character. They made no appeal to popular ears. They are intensely cultured, and have a certain Miltonic stiffness and bareness, in many lines, which require for their apprehension that a reader's taste should have been curbed and enriched by classical training. He made some experiments, notably in a sort of rhythmical prose, with a pulse of metre beating throughout. That this style was not wholly successful is perhaps proved by the fact that it has had no imitators, except Mr. Mallock, who, in the 'New Republic,' produced a similar poem which, if it had been a genuine work of the poet's, would have been faithfully, and rightly, accepted as a fine poem of the kind. Matthew Arnold wasted time, it may be whispered, in writing a play, 'Balder Dead,' where much emotion and high poetry is expended on a subject which never seems quite to burst into flame. He wrote a very noble narrative fragment, 'Sohrab and Rustum,' which is a splendid specimen of the self-conscious and elaborate epic, and touches the springs of life. Perhaps his best work was done in iambic and stanzaic lyrics, mostly of a gnomic type, full of finely crystallised maxims; while the romantic poem of the 'Scholar-Gypsy' and the monody 'Thyrsis,' on the death of Clough, have taken rank among the great poems of the century. But the poems, as a whole, illustrate a melancholy habit of mind. Occasionally there are hints of a mournful passion, not sensuous, but spiritual, which seems held in check by a certain timidity and coldness of nature which dares not let itself go. The impression they give is that of a mind ill at ease, with an intense love of beauty, a desire for heightened living and zest, struggling with a nature which is hardly robust enough to live as it longs to live. Here, one says, is a spirit that feels the weariness more than the joy of life, and that checks itself again and again on the threshold of experience, trying to school itself into tranquillity and philosophical peace.

The hand that wrote

Calm's not life's crown, though calm is well,

must have been that of a man who felt that through some deficiency of vital force he could not afford to gratify his

desires, and that his only chance of peace was to accept what he knew to be only second-best—namely, life on a lower plane, husbanded and guarded so that its resources may not be squandered. It is a nature which dreads the fight and the struggle, the elements which to coarser and stronger spirits, who do not trouble themselves about the wounds which they inflict, add zest to the things for which they fight. But there is a nobler quality than that in the background. The nature behind the poems is pre-eminently just, high-minded, and affectionate, born out of due time into a world which is still very far even from its conscious possibilities. The poems reflect an intense love of the earth—not the wild untamed earth of peak and forest, but the earth as subdued and replenished by man. The morality they teach is high and austere. Life is a pilgrimage of which the end is uncertain. There are beautiful things by the way, which the pilgrim sees with hungry heart and tears unsealed; and perhaps some kindly power hangs out signs of love and hope in wayside flowers and forest-aisles. But life, it would seem, must be a constant renunciation, with no hope of immediate reward. Not that men should wilfully abide in sadness—there is work to be done, there are tasks to be performed. If one desires to get the strongest possible contrast to Matthew Arnold, one may consider the poems of his contemporary, William Morris. Both men had the same intense love of man's handiwork—the tilled field, the homestead, the garden, the winding lane. But Morris is full of the joy of life and work, while Arnold gazes mournfully on a life which it is impossible to enjoy, and work which it is unmanly to avoid.

Perhaps one gets nearest to Matthew Arnold's thought in the solemn reflectiveness of 'Empedocles on Etna,' where the contrast is heightened by the boy's voice breaking in, like the song of the wayside bird. But to the soul-wearied tortured philosopher, planning a grave flight from a world in which it seems impossible to live wisely and calmly, all that radiant and careless joy is but one of the pathetic fetters which pinion the soul, and which must sternly be broken through.

The poems all belong to a period of unrest. Life had in store for Matthew Arnold a fuller message. He was to live and thrive, without ever drifting into comfortable materialism. He was to enrich the world by his gentle irony, his temperate example, his unsuspecting candour, and by the sweet reasonable-

ness which he practised as well as preached. But the poetical impulse left him, not probably because he was busy, but because, as has befallen even the most otiose of poets, the nerves of perception and lyrical expression get dulled by the mere act of living; it becomes not worth while to express in dancing and tinkling measures such very temperate raptures! And so he sank, not into silence indeed, but into the congenial task of pleading more prosaically and directly with an unreasonable world.

When one comes to survey the life and character of Matthew Arnold, one is struck at once by the curious set of contrasts which it displays. His grand manner, his social brilliance, his love of appearances and high consideration, do not seem to correspond to the extreme homeliness of his letters, which are, perhaps, the tamest documents—for all their goodness and kindness—ever penned by a man of genius: they are so much concerned with the details of life, with the food he ate, the names of the people he met, his trivial adventures, that, taken by themselves, one might imagine them to be the work of a capable, kindly, and intelligent commercial traveller. There is no enthusiasm, no discontent, and an almost total absence of ideas about them. But at least his extreme and deep-seated modesty comes out. He speaks in one passage of the fact that is borne in upon him every year that he lives—that success as a writer is far more a matter of good fortune than genius, surrounded as every writer is by hosts of intelligent and capable people, all aiming at the same sort of success. That is a very wise and mellow maxim; but it is the last thing that a casual stranger meeting Matthew Arnold, in all his princely condescension, would have credited him with feeling. Then, too, behind this easy and distinguished life, there looks out from the poems the eager, dissatisfied, unhappy spirit, only craving for peace, and unable by any device to compass it. Yet, looking at the facts, even his overwhelming sorrows—his three sons died in boyhood—seem to have been gently borne. It is difficult to bring all these strands together. There appears at first sight a duality of disposition, a nature that agonised in the deeps of thought, and a nature that could live easily and cheerfully in daily life. My own belief is that he was one of those rare spirits who had really disciplined his life into patience and acquiescence out of feverish discontent and limitless dreams.

He had realised, as all poets do not realise, that, apart from visions and reveries, there is a very real and simple life of duty and family ties and intellectual enterprise, that must be courageously and genially dealt with. He had a very noble and simple nature, incapable of meanness, or suspicion, or resentment. He found, I believe, that the one certain way to misunderstand humanity is by intellectually despising it, and that the life of the mind, prospective as it must be, must not be allowed to interfere with the present and urgent life of the heart. He was not, it seems, a sagacious political prophet. The refined Whiggery, which he picked up under Lord Lansdowne, obscured his view, while the constitution of his mind made him incapable of recognising or sympathising with the rough and vivid hopes of democracy. His political judgments are, indeed, quite singularly inept. Neither had he any constructive social power. His educational ideals are pedantic and bureaucratic; but he had a real love of his fellow-men and a great tolerance for their weaknesses. If they did not flock into his intellectual fold, he yet was a friend of liberty, and struck some shrewd blows at stupidity, complacency, commercial religion, and vulgarity. And when he was swiftly summoned from the life he loved so well, the world lost not a warrior or a prophet, but a man who had lived faithfully and guilelessly, a wise and tender critic who had held up a faithful mirror to the faults of his time, and had done much to interpret and enforce the beauty and significance of thought and emotion and uplifted life. In one of his poems he says that *esteem* and *function* are the only merits which death allows. And these he had indeed, when his body was laid to rest, of purest quality and in fullest measure.



*BLINDS DOWN :**A CHRONICLE OF CHARMINSTER.<sup>1</sup>*

BY HORACE ANNESLEY VACHELL.

## CHAPTER VII.

## A CLOUD UPON THE HORIZON.

MARY rose abruptly and went to the window looking out into Portman Square, whose large respectable mansions spoke so eloquently of property. She knew what her own money had accomplished, and she wondered whether Rosetta's love was strong enough to confront poverty and exile. She knew also that she must speak plainly, and she had discovered long ago that it is dangerous to offer advice, because so often it is taken. Let it be remembered, also, that she was half American, and had spent impressionable years in a country where young men and women do marry in the teeth of poverty, and where such marriages are justified by their results.

She came back to the bed to find Rosetta with her face to the wall.

'Is that why you lured on Sir Rodney to talk of his early struggles?'

'Yes.'

'Tell me everything, my dear.'

The simple story was told without interruption by the listener. The recital moved Mary profoundly, although she had the barest acquaintance with Septimus. She recalled his eyes, and a strong chin, and his voice with a vibrant and virile quality.

'I must ask some disagreeable questions.'

'Ask anything you like.'

'Have you tried to realise what life is on a small income?'

'We have always been poor.'

'In a sense; but there has been sufficient. If Septimus lost his position—through ill health, let us say?'

<sup>1</sup> Copyright, 1911, by H. A. Vachell, in the United States of America.

'He has splendid health, and so have I.'

'Suppose he lost his health and his income. Where would you be then?'

'I run that risk, of course.'

'You are willing to run it?'

'Yes.'

'As the wife of a poor man, you will be rather dull.'

'Not with Septimus. I don't think he knows how much I love him.'

'If children come, you may have to send them home, or bring them home. That would mean separation.'

'You talk as if we were going to be poor for ever and ever. Septimus is sure to make a fortune.'

Her optimism dismayed the woman of the world, but she felt impotent to attack it.

'At any rate you will have to wait a long time.'

'I shall wait.'

Something told Mary that this was true love not to be diverted by arguments, however sound in themselves. She shrugged her shoulders.

'You won't tell anybody?' asked Rosetta.

'I must tell Mauleverer.'

They talked for nearly an hour. At the end of that time Mary knew Rosetta almost as intimately as it is possible for one woman to know another. Her sympathy flowed the more abundantly as she realised the nature of Rosetta's relations with the Sisters, and what the girl had suffered in keeping this attachment secret from them.

'I feel,' concluded Rosetta, 'that I've enjoyed this splendid time under false pretences—that I should not have had it if they suspected the truth; and, I suppose, that is why I've loved my stolen sweets!'

'You have another month,' said Mary. 'Well, my dear, I shall get rid of your elderly lover, and I pray that your Septimus may turn out as great a conqueror. All the same, I wish you had been heart-free when you came here.'

The Head of the Family used unparliamentary language when his wife reported in full.

'I've earned the chestnut,' she said.

'D——n that boy! I believe you are on his side, Mary.'

'Paul and Virginia used to appeal enormously to me.'

'If I remember rightly, that pretty tale ended unhappily.'

'Alas! yes.'

'I blame the ladies. Why didn't they keep a sharp eye on the little witch?'

'Why, indeed? I have watched Syringa ever since she was thirteen.'

That closed the incident. Rosetta enjoyed her last month hugely, and received many invitations to visit friends and kinsmen in the country, all of which she refused.

'I am Cinderella. I must go back to my kitchen. Whatever happens, I shall be able to boast that I have had one gorgeous time.'

The Sisters welcomed her delightedly, concealing any disappointment they may have felt concerning rejected Under-Secretaries and Proconsuls. Charminster knew that Rosetta had captured hearts and flouted them; Charminster beheld the maid in her London frocks and sympathised with the victims. Laura Pogany said: 'I expect she's waiting for a duke!' Everybody agreed that success had not turned the beauty's head. She slipped easily into the old grooves, laughing and chattering as if Charminster were the gayest place in the world.

'She is glad to get back,' said Jaqueline to Prudence.

'She is more thoughtful.'

'I have no regrets, Sister. How dull we should be without her!'

Nevertheless, Rosetta's wish to master plain-cooking and plain-sewing was pronounced 'unsuitable.' Jaqueline took much pleasure in buying her a tambour-frame and many skeins of silk; Prudence insisted that the dear child should take lessons on the mandoline from a lady lately settled in Charminster, who had known easier circumstances and was spoken of as a 'decayed gentlewoman.' Rosetta protested that she didn't want to learn the mandoline, but Prudence made a point of it, insisting that it would be a true charity. To please her, Rosetta consented. A certain amount of time, also, was devoted to visiting their humbler neighbours; but on such occasions Crump warned the housewives of an impending visit, and the august visitors were received with smiles and clean faces, upon floors diligently scrubbed. The usual questions

were asked and answered, small donations of tea and coal were accepted with effusive gratitude, and then the ladies would sweep majestically on to other cottages. If Rosetta happened to observe 'I'd like to examine the cupboards,' Prudence would be sure to reply, in a tone of mild surprise, 'Why, my love?' And then Rosetta would murmur: 'They knew when we were coming, and the visiting face rather bores me. I want to know what is in the cupboards.'

'Are you alluding to possible skeletons?'

'They would be rather exciting. Crump hinted to me that the bottle of port you gave to the Rockley children was drunk at one sitting by Rockley.'

Invariably the ladies would lower their lids, looking down their noses; and Prudence would reply coldly: 'Crump can hardly know that for a fact.'

'Isn't it our business to find out if it is a fact?'

'Most certainly not.'

At meetings of the S.P.G. Prudence presided with gracious dignity, eager to listen to details concerning the lives of the naked and unashamed heathen, details which she ignored when they concerned British subjects. Rosetta grumbled because so much money was sent out of Charminster which might have been spent in Hog Lane. To this, of course, Prudence made the orthodox answer: 'We are commanded to carry the Gospel into distant lands.'

Day by day, it became more abundantly plain to the girl that discussion upon themes already cut-and-dried by the Sisters was futile and exasperating. During the early spring, Mr. Lovibond announced that the Bishop of the diocese would hold a Confirmation in May—an event of the deepest interest to the Misses Mauleverer. Candidates were instructed to present themselves at the Vicarage for due preparation; and the ladies undertook the mission of finding children who were eligible, but likely to hold back. With Rosetta, they made a grand tour of the cottages in the immediate vicinity of the Dower House. Prudence said to Mrs. Rockley—

'You will be glad to hear that the Bishop is coming to Charminster in May. George is quite old enough to be confirmed. Tell him to go to the Vicarage next Tuesday, at ten punctually.'

Mrs. Rockley curtsied, saying nervously:

'Thank you, m'm; Garge 'e's gone for a soldier these two months, but Tom'll go gladly. That boy's allers ready for a lark.'

Rosetta laughed. Prudence replied austere: 'Being confirmed is not a lark, Sarah Rockley. Kindly make that plain to Thomas, and see to it that he is clean and punctual in attendance.'

Outside the cottage, she said to Rosetta:

'Why did you laugh?'

'Oh, Prudence, I couldn't help it.'

'I saw nothing to laugh at—did you, Jaqueline?'

'Nothing, Sister.'

Other humours were developed in connexion with this particular Confirmation. Custom and tradition ordained that the young girls presented to the Bishop should wear white muslin caps of a well-defined pattern. Calling upon Mrs. Veal, the wife of the gardener at the Dower House, Prudence was distressed to find that a proud mother of a pretty child had trimmed a cap with—lace!

'Fanny looks sweetly pretty in it, doesn't she, Miss?' Mrs. Veal asked Rosetta.

'Yes,' said Rosetta, thoughtlessly.

'It is *most* unsuitable,' observed Prudence. 'Fanny cannot wear that.'

Mrs. Veal, an obstinate woman, looked very sulky. 'It only cost sixpence-ha'penny, and I bought it at Possnicker's.'

'Where you bought it, Martha, and what you paid for it are matters quite irrelevant. Fanny cannot wear it.'

'There's nothing, seemin'ly, in the Book about lace.'

'Don't argue, my good woman. Fanny cannot be permitted to wear that cap.'

But Mrs. Veal never budged from her position, and ultimately the Vicar was invited to interfere, which he did zealously, but ineffectually. Upon the eve of the Confirmation, Mrs. Veal was informed by authority that Fanny could not wear a lace cap and sit with the other girls. She must sit behind them, and be presented to his Lordship last of all. Then Mrs. Veal scored heavily in the presence of the Vicar and the Misses Mauleverer.

'Very well,' she said, with heightened colour. 'But we're told that the last shall be first and the first last.'

Once more, to the distress of Prudence, Rosetta giggled.

During this springtime, an exciting letter arrived from Singapore, which Mrs. Lovibond showed to Rosetta. Septimus intimated that he might be offered preferment. 'One of our fellows,' he wrote, 'has been scrapped. We are all very distressed about it; but it's part of the system, and exceptions can't be made. This particular chap was one of the ablest of the clerks, and everybody envied him when he was sent up the Irrawaddy to look after a big plantation. Unfortunately, jungle-fever attacked him, and instead of coming back to Singapore he stuck it out. He's a wreck, poor chap, and our doctor says that he must leave the peninsula and not come back. It's tough luck for him, but there seems to be a chance of my succeeding him over the heads of men senior to me, which is complimentary. . . .'

Mrs. Lovibond and Rosetta stared at each other with anxious eyes.

'I hope he won't get it,' said Rosetta defiantly.

'He must accept what is offered. His constitution is very strong.'

By the next mail, word came that the appointment had been offered and accepted. 'Don't worry,' wrote Septimus; 'I was never more fit, and I shall take particular precautions against the fever, which, as a rule, attacks the weaklings. The last man was rather anæmic and delicate. My screw is raised; and I shall get some big-game shooting. You won't hear from me for some time, as I shall be at the back of Nowhere. I shall be able to save nine-tenths of my salary . . .'

'If he should be scrapped?' faltered Rosetta.

Mrs. Lovibond said grimly: 'No fear of that. If it had to be, Septimus would scrap himself.'

The summer passed slowly; and Rosetta tried not to compare it with the preceding season. The Mauleverers were in Japan, and talked of spending the winter in America, amongst Mary's kinsmen. Sir Rodney Brough had returned long ago to South Africa, and his name appeared frequently in the papers as belonging to the most capable administrator of his day. Rosetta sometimes wondered: 'Did he really care for me?'

She whiled away many hours sketching, having some talent for drawing in water-colour. The Sisters had not been able to

afford proper instruction, and Rosetta practised her art under the simple tutelage of Miss Jaqueline, who never painted landscapes as they were, but as she liked them to be, with a rosy glow obscuring bad drawing. Rosetta watched her with amusement. Often a pretty effect, not at all in keeping with the sketch, was arrived at by happy chance. Jaqueline never destroyed the effects of happy chance, but gloated over them. When Rosetta murmured, 'But with an evening sky you couldn't have a dark shadow in that corner,' Jaqueline would hasten to answer: 'My love, it looks so nice. I can't think how I got it. And, after all, the true aim of art is to beautify.'

Rosetta would answer dubiously: 'All the same, I like books and pictures to be convincing.'

'Realism,' sighed the elder lady, 'is so brutal sometimes.'

Nevertheless, Rosetta could look back upon this period with a lively satisfaction. To use an expression of Septimus, she 'played up.' She walked with her Sisters upon the high ground, where the air was more bracing, and she constrained herself to adopt the easy gait, the leisurely stroll of middle-age which marches so comfortably with the ideas and conversation of middle-age. The girl fell into the habit of acquiescence, adopting the familiar 'I quite agree' of Jaqueline.

In August they went to Bognor, and at Bognor pleasant words came from the Head of the Family, asking Rosetta to spend the next season at Mauleverer House, and concluding: 'Madame Prune's bill will be paid cheerfully by me.' This heartened the Sisters to fresh hopes and ambitions. Alone together, they prattled of the match that the dear child would make. The sun shone gloriously in their azure skies.

Towards the close of August, Prudence received a letter from Mrs. Lovibond, which she read, according to inviolate custom, after finishing her second cup of tea.

'Oh, dear!' she exclaimed, with deep concern.

Jaqueline saw that something of grave import had happened.

'What is the matter, Sister? You are quite pale.'

Prudence answered tremulously:

'Dear Mrs. Lovibond writes in sore trouble. Septimus, it seems, has been mauled by a tiger.'

Neither of the ladies was looking at Rosetta. She controlled her quivering face, as she asked:



'Badly mauled?'

'I fear so. A fellow-clerk has sent the sad news.'

'The dear boy is strong,' said Jaqueline; 'he will get over it.'

'Yes,' said Rosetta calmly.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### RUBBISH TO THE VOID.

WHEN Rosetta returned to Charminster, a few days later, Mrs. Lovibond showed to her the letter from the fellow-clerk.

'Septimus,' it ran, 'has been mauled by a tiger, which imprudently he tackled on foot. He behaved with the most splendid courage and presence of mind. The brute sprang upon him, and began gnawing his shoulder. He lay as one dead, which saved his life, but we are terribly afraid that he may lose his arm. His shikarri was able to despatch the tiger; and then had the greatest difficulty in getting Septimus back to his bungalow, and thence down the river to a place where he could be attended to. The delay, and the great loss of blood, brought about ugly complications, but the doctor now in attendance is reasonably sure that the worst is over. I will write again by the next mail. . . .'

A dreadful week of suspense followed. Rosetta was obliged to mask her feelings in the presence of the Sisters; but her pale face distressed them. Jaqueline whispered to Prudence: 'This accident to Septimus has upset the child.' The ladies avoided each other's eyes, and Prudence muttered: 'She is very sympathetic.' In their hearts they wondered uneasily if the 'mild flirtation' had been more serious than they had supposed; but the habit of ignoring what they did not wish to believe sustained them. The child was suffering because an old friend lay at death's door. Nevertheless, they were extremely tender with her and with the unhappy mother, who seemed to be ten years older.

The second letter ended the cruel suspense. Septimus would live, but his left arm was gone, and the doctor had no doubt whatever that the recovery would be slow—a matter of months, possibly years!

'He will be scrapped,' exclaimed Rosetta, bursting into passionate tears.

At the bottom of the letter were some crosses feebly made with a pencil. When the mother thought of the strong hand that had inscribed those crosses she wept also, and the words of comfort which she tried to whisper to Rosetta died upon her quivering lips.

'I love him more than ever,' said Rosetta. 'This makes no difference to me; I shall have to wait longer—that's all.'

Mrs. Lovibond kissed her in silence.

The next mail brought better news. Septimus was back in Singapore, and his wounds were healing. The Sisters heard Rosetta laugh, and consoled themselves with the conviction that they were right in assuming that the affair had not been serious. The child was her dear self again!

At the end of a fortnight Septimus wrote in pencil to his mother:

DEAREST MOTHER,—I have resigned my position. Nothing else is possible. Three doctors are unanimous in declaring that the climate here would kill me in my enfeebled condition. I have saved 200*l.*, and I shall begin again in a new country. I am sailing to New Zealand next month, and the sea voyage ought to put me on my legs. I shall not come home.

I am too weak to write more. Please give the enclosed packet to Rosetta. She will understand what I mean by returning to her my most precious possession.—Your loving son,  
SEPTIMUS.

The packet contained nothing but the tress of hair.

Alone in her room at the Dower House, Rosetta locked the door and examined the tress of her hair very carefully with brightening eyes. He had not sent back all of it!

Fortified by this conviction, she decided to break her word, and write to her lover. She wrote half a dozen letters, many of them stained with tears, but the one that was sent indicated no trace of the misery that consumed her:

MY DARLING SEPTIMUS,—I love you, and I shall always love you. If I could come to you I would do so, and I will come as soon as I am of age. That is what comforts me. I know that you will get well, and that you will accomplish more with one arm than other men can do with two. Poverty does not

frighten me, and I am determined to find out how poor people live, so that I can be a real help to you. The Sisters object to my cooking, and making my own gowns, but I shall find a way. If I could learn drawing properly, I might earn something. I must make you understand that money is nothing to me without you. I ache with longing to be near you. I am desperately jealous of your nurse, whoever she may be. Oh, Septimus, I don't think you know how much I love you!—  
Your faithful

ROSETTA.

This was sealed and despatched to the *Poste Restante*, Auckland, New Zealand, the address given by Septimus to his mother.

Then she attempted valiantly to take up her daily life, and make the most of it. Months must elapse before she could receive an answer to her letter.

We append a chronicle of her day's doings.

She rose at seven, and descended to the drawing-room, where she practised, upon an aged and infirm piano, Czerny's Scales and Exercises. She was aware that she had no real aptitude for music, and that she had been badly taught by Jaqueline, but the Sisters liked to hear her play what used to be called *morceaux de salon*—tinkly melodies, such as 'Les Cloches de Monastère,' 'The Maiden's Prayer,' and Thalberg's 'Home Sweet Home,' in which the *arpeggios* were quite beyond her powers. At nine, Prudence read family prayers; and at a quarter-past nine the bacon was attacked and consumed with dry bread. No Mauleverer ate butter with either bacon or jam! After breakfast, Prudence devoted an hour to household management—a task peculiarly her own, never shared by either Jaqueline or Rosetta. While she was thus occupied, Jaqueline and Rosetta would translate a French book, such as 'Les Malheurs de Sophie,' or 'Un Philosophe sous les Toits.' At half-past eleven the three Sisters met in the inner drawing-room for the serious reading of the day, beginning with the leading article in 'The Times,' and going on to some instructive biography or history. At one, they lunched solidly upon plain boiled or roast. After luncheon, Jaqueline and Prudence retired to their bedrooms for a composing nap. The walk upon the high ground, or into Charminster, followed. The tradesmen greeted the ladies with deferential courtesy. Mr. Possnicker, the draper, invariably hurried from his office to

wait upon the Honourable Miss Mauleverer; Skillicorn, the fishmonger, reserved for her his freshest soles, although perfectly aware that Prudence might reply graciously: 'I think we will take plaice to-day, Mr. Skillicorn.' The butcher, for his part, made it a point of honour to offer the ladies the refusal of sweetbreads!

After tea, unless there were visitors, the Sisters were occupied with a correspondence sufficiently voluminous. They liked to keep in touch with kinswomen whom they had not seen for a decade; and their envelopes, pale grey in colour, were sealed with a wafer displaying the initials of each lady entwined in a pretty cypher. After dinner, Rosetta would play the piano for half an hour, and then Prudence would read aloud some light and agreeable fiction. Jaqueline adored Sir Walter Scott; Prudence preferred Thackeray; but the works of Miss Yonge were deemed the mental food proper to Rosetta's tender years. There had been a long and drastic course of Miss Edgeworth, Mrs. Sherwood, and that delightful authoress, Ann Fraser-Tytler.

After much discussion, and not without heart-burnings, it had been decided by Prudence that Rosetta was now old enough to listen to 'The Scarlet Letter,' a book destined to play a part in her mental development and future life. From the beginning, she was absorbed by the amazing romance. But, to the consternation of the Sisters, she began to ask inconvenient questions. After the second chapter, as Prudence was adjusting the book-marker, Rosetta said reflectively:

'Is the breaking of the Seventh Commandment a more deadly sin than the breaking of the others?'

Prudence considered this, while Jaqueline bent over her tambour-frame. Rosetta continued:

'Is it, for instance, as deadly as breaking the Sixth?'

'In my opinion, child—yes.'

'Oh! Then why do we punish the breaking of the Sixth with death?'

'In a very real sense,' said Prudence austere, 'the breaking of the Seventh Commandment is punished by death.'

'I don't quite understand.'

'It is impossible for you, my dear, quite to understand. When you are older you will discover that the breaking of this

particular Commandment means moral death. The offenders, like Hester Prynne, are regarded as without the pale.'

'Were some of our kings so regarded?'

'My child!'

'Was David so regarded?'

'We cannot discuss characters in sacred history.'

The reading continued next day, although Prudence said confidentially to Jaqueline: 'We are not happy in the choice of this book.'

'I quite agree; but now that we have begun it——?'

'We must go on.'

To their distress, it soon became manifest that Rosetta was filled with an immense and disproportionate sympathy for the mother of little Pearl. To Prudence's horror, she exclaimed:

'I love Hester. I don't care what she did, I love her. And I think she was outrageously treated by those beasts of Puritans. I'm glad their days are over.'

'They are not over, Rosetta,' said Prudence. 'In this town, to-day, if a woman behaves shamelessly, she is punished as Hester was punished.'

Rosetta jumped up excitedly:

'You don't mean to say that if Hester Prynne were walking about Charminster you would refuse to speak to her?'

'We are at liberty,' replied Prudence frigidly, 'to form what friends and acquaintances we please. Speaking for myself, I should refuse to know Hester Prynne.'

'I should be kind to the child,' faltered Jaqueline.

To the amazement of the ladies, Rosetta burst into tears and fled from the room. Slowly Prudence rose from her chair, crossed the room, and placed the volume on its shelf beside 'Mosses from an Old Manse.'

'For the present,' she said firmly, 'we will confine ourselves to lighter fiction.'

'Yes,' said Jaqueline. She added apologetically: 'The dear love has such a tender heart.'

'She has always been lacking in restraint.'

Before prayers, next morning, Rosetta entreated pardon. Prudence, as she kissed a flushed cheek, said graciously:

'The book is—upsetting. We won't finish it.'

Rosetta hesitated. Then she said in a low voice: 'I did not mean to tell you, Prudence, but last night, when you were

asleep, I stole downstairs, found the book on its shelf, took it upstairs—and finished it!’

Prudence frowned. Reading in bed, a bed embellished by muslin curtains, had been strictly forbidden.

‘Oh, Rosetta!’ gasped Jaqueline.

‘I simply couldn’t help it.’

‘No more shall be said,’ pronounced Prudence. ‘The incident has been painful, but it is closed.’

When the evening came, Prudence opened Miss Yonge’s latest novel.

‘Read this, Rosetta. I obtained it from Mudie’s this afternoon.’

‘Dear Miss Yonge is so safe,’ added Jaqueline.

‘But you promised me that we should read “Adam Bede” next.’

‘I have changed my mind.’

‘Can’t we compromise on “The Newcomes”?’

‘Why not?’ asked Jaqueline. ‘Thackeray, Sister, is your favourite author.’

Rosetta, perceiving that the situation was strained, thought fit to attempt to relax it with the remark—

‘Laura Pogany tells me that Ouida is simply splendid.’

‘Ouida!’

Rosetta had not read any of Ouida’s books, but she divined that she had been indiscreet.

‘I am positive,’ said Prudence, ‘that Mrs. Pogany can have no idea that Laura is reading Ouida. A hint to her would not be out of place.’

‘Oh, please don’t betray me!’ said Rosetta.

‘I much fear,’ said Prudence solemnly, ‘that Laura has been reading Ouida on the sly.’

## CHAPTER IX.

### AVE, CÆSAR!

THROUGHOUT that winter Rosetta remained in Charminster, although she received more than one invitation to visit country houses. Those invitations had to be declined, because in the ‘seventies young ladies of the upper class were not permitted to travel alone. Also, it was impossible for the Sisters to re-

plenish Rosetta's wardrobe 'suitably.' The Head of the Family would return to England in March, and then there would be the excitement of another visit to Madame Prune. Meanwhile, Rosetta had little to beguile her lively imagination except speculation in regard to the letter she was expecting from Septimus. He wrote to his mother from Auckland, much depressed in spirits. The sea voyage, from which so much was hoped, had been very trying on account of boisterous weather. 'Tempest-tossed I am,' he declared, 'and in dry dock for repairs.' He wrote from some hospital, explaining curtly that his wounds were not yet healed. Notwithstanding, he had made friends with an editor, and had done work for him. He added in quite his old style: 'The good fellow scoffed at my suggestion to supply him with first impressions. Every travelling Briton bothers him to death with such applications. I assured him that I had an original touch of my own, which he would recognise on sight, and backed up the bluff with a sample of my wares. He is kind enough to say that I have the makings of a journalist, which I have always known. . . .'

Throughout December, Rosetta was the first to enter the dining-room, where the morning correspondence was placed beside Prudence's napkin, and subject to her inspection. Upon Christmas Eve the long-expected letter arrived. Rosetta slipped it into a pocket, wondering whether Crump had perceived the stamp. She read it, shivering with cold, in the familiar trysting-place beneath the elm-tree, which had been 'blasted by lightning.'

MY ROSETTA,—You are a dear and a sweet, and enshrined for ever as such in my memory. Now I shall talk like a father. What torments me more than any physical pain is the thought that I may have destroyed your chance of happiness. You are made to be loved. I have seen you look at children, dirty little brats some of them, with an expression in your eyes which told me that your life would never be complete till you had babies of your own. Before God, I swear solemnly that such peace as I may yet achieve depends upon your marriage with the right sort. I am—derelict. No, not quite that, but a wreck of a man, stranded here, and likely to go to pieces at any moment. If you did come to me, I should be tempted to kill myself. If you saw me, you would understand.

I don't ask you to cast me out of your heart, but I do



beseech you to find room in it for a husband and children. It is big enough to house a large family. If I know anything of you, the life in Charminster will be more than you can bear. Those old moss-grown towns of England distil happiness for some women, but for ardent spirits misery and heart-sickness. You will not be allowed to work, as your own mother worked; and you have not the strength of will, nor perhaps the hardness of heart, to cut loose from sisters who are devoted to you, and yet, unhappily, so utterly different from you. For my sake, for your own sake, for your sisters' sake, take hold of life and shape it in obedience to natural laws. Thousands of lonely women are staring at faded photographs, when they might be kissing the faces of children. Too late they find out their mistake. Sometimes I have a nightmare vision of you, old, haggard, soured, wearing the willow for me, ruined by me. That thought grinds me to powder.—Yours faithfully,

SEPTIMUS.

Rosetta read the letter three times. The writer's strength diffused itself through her mind and body. Often she had wondered whether Septimus loved her with the passion which she felt for him, but which she was too innocent and ignorant to analyse. Now, suddenly, she realised that his love was greater than hers. Afterwards, she knew that this letter had made a woman of her. He revealed to her—herself; plumbed the depths of her soul, into which she peered for the first time, into which, hitherto, she had not dared to look. Till this moment marriage with Septimus had meant—what? A joy undefined, a satisfaction inarticulate, an intensity of emotion magnified because it was apprehended dimly, something tremendous and overwhelming, like a mountain seen for the first time through encompassing mists.

Slowly the mists rolled away.

Rosetta returned to the Dower House through the garden, so charming in summer, so desolate and forlorn in December. She stared at the high walls bristling with broken glass, at the trees blackened by smoke, at the bare earth, and the grass discoloured and seared by frost. Septimus was dead—and buried in New Zealand. He desired that she should so regard him, and his will was still potent. The last word had been said.

During the night it snowed, and the Misses Mauleverer walked to church through a white landscape beneath an illuminating rather than a warming sun. Rosetta wore a fur jacket, a present from her sisters, the outward sign of many small acts of self-denial which ought to have taken some of the chill from her heart. She wondered miserably: 'Shall I ever feel warm again?'

It happened that a stranger preached the sermon—a small, thin, old man, with an ascetic face redeemed from ugliness by a fine pair of eyes. Mr. Lovibond, narrow of mind in the pulpit and noisy in manner, sat in his comfortable stall, looking sleekly florid and well-nourished. The stranger gave out the familiar text: 'Unto us a Child is born.'

The theme was treated with a simplicity and directness that challenged attention at once. The preacher began impressively, leaning forward, and speaking in a low clear voice, which at times quavered oddly. Often he paused, evidently seeking for the right word, or perhaps selecting it. Invariably it was the right word.

'I, who speak to you, am a childless man.'

The shufflings of many feet, the rustling of skirts, the whispering, the irritating coughs, died away into silence, as the stranger allowed his statement to sink in. Prudence Mauleverer raised her head; Jaqueline shivered, opening wide her soft blue eyes; Rosetta glanced at Mrs. Lovibond sitting alone in her pew, rigid with attention.

'And although I speak to all of you, my message is more particularly delivered to those like myself who have been denied the supreme benediction of children, and to those who have lost children.'

The clear voice was monotonous—not deliberately so, for the man was no actor, no rhetorician. The colourless tones, the pale patient face, the bent figure, were eloquent of a life not barren in the finer sense, but sterile, as most of us understand the word, of mundane joys and gratified ambitions. Obviously, the man had suffered cruelly from ill-health and poverty, and the myriad disabilities inseparable from such conditions. Revealing without words the long lean years of his own drab past, he evoked, also, a panoramic vision of the deserts in which others had wandered, the arid sands of each particular wilderness. Rosetta saw two tears trickling down Jaqueline's

cheeks, and falling unheeded upon the dark-grey silk mantle kept so immaculate from stains.

'We are assured elsewhere,' the preacher continued, 'that the Child was given more especially to those who needed Him most. How dear the gift has been to the innumerable men and women constrained to lead celibate lives I dare not say; and it is not my intention to harrow your feelings by dwelling upon what we have lost. I ask you rather to join with me in computing our gain, to forget, if we can, the bitterness in our hearts, and to remember the gladness only—the Gospel which a Child brought, more precious than the gold and frankincense and myrrh of the Wise Men.'

As he spoke, he became transformed. Colour flowed into his cheeks and voice. A blind man would have affirmed that the preacher was young and strong, essentially vital, one from whom virtue flowed.

The sermon dealt with children, and the wisdom of children—surely a marvel to all sages. It seemed to Rosetta that a child was speaking, an old man who had remained a child in purity, in sincerity, in faith. He touched upon Christ's visit to the Temple, when He was twelve years old.

'It must have struck you,' he said, 'as curious that those learned scribes should have listened to a Boy and marvelled at His understanding. I cannot believe that a miracle was performed. I do not suppose, for an instant, that this Child instructed those Doctors of the Law upon subjects to which their lives had been devoted. It is more reasonable to suppose that He revealed the wisdom that the so-called wise are too apt to ignore, and which in all its manifestations is divine and not of this earth at all. I submit to you that the Child spoke of love—love for everything and everybody outside Himself—a striking and original theme at a time when the world was ruled by Hate and Terror. Small wonder that those hard men were astonished! A child's capacity for loving must be amazing to all who attempt to measure it.'

He gave instances, illustrating the wisdom of child-like love, its quality of commanding recognition; its fluidity, percolating everywhere; its affinity, from a chemical point of view, with every lawful object of human endeavour.

'Labour alone,' he exclaimed, 'will not conquer all things; but inspired and sustained by love it is indeed invincible.'

If he strayed occasionally from the children, he always returned to them, as if ill at ease when apart from them. He concluded with an odd abruptness—

‘The pagan mythology affirmed that Wisdom sprang, full-grown and armed, from the head of Zeus. Love appeared to Christians as a little child.’

Rosetta rose from her knees feeling much warmer, for in the middle of the sermon Jaqueline’s hand had sought hers, and the gentle pressure seemed to say: ‘You came to us, as a child, and you will never quite know how dear you have been, because the gift of tongues has not yet been vouchsafed to us.’ As the three Sisters walked home at the leisurely pace which Prudence had never been known to exceed, Rosetta kept on asking herself this question: ‘How did Septimus find out what I did not know myself until yesterday?’

According to custom, the Christmas dinner was served in the middle of the day. Crump brought in a blazing pudding which had been stirred in its making by each of the Sisters. In it had been dropped a thimble, a gold ring, and half a crown. Jaqueline had long since insisted upon the half-crown, because she had read somewhere of a child being choked by swallowing a sixpence. Upon this occasion, much to Jaqueline’s delight, Rosetta secured both the ring and the piece of silver. Whereupon, with old-fashioned courtesy, Prudence toasted the maid as matron. A gracious smile vanished from her face, when Rosetta exclaimed:

‘I wish one could have children without being married!’

Jaqueline glanced round, to assure herself that Crump had left the dining-room.

‘My dear child!’ she gasped. Rosetta continued calmly:

‘I mean it. Dr. Pogany says that there are many more women than men. We can’t all be married; but it does seem rather unfair that we should not have children.’

To this Prudence replied austere:

‘Really, you must break yourself of this habit of saying extraordinary things. They are liable to misconstruction.’

Rosetta, quite undaunted, went on: ‘If I could have a baby by holding up my finger, I should hold one up now.’ She held up two fingers.

'You talk too much nonsense for a girl of your age. I trust you said nothing of this kind to Dr. Pogany.'

'He would have laughed.'

'If you like being laughed at, there is nothing more to say.'

During the afternoon she went up to the Vicarage, wondering whether Septimus had written to his mother. When Mrs. Lovibond kissed her she divined not only that he had written, but that the letter was not intended for her eyes. She said quickly:

'Septimus has written to me; and he has written to you?'

'Yes.'

Rosetta glanced as usual at the photograph of her lover, and then uttered a sharp exclamation. Beside it, not yet framed, was another photograph—a small group, badly composed and badly taken—a fair enough specimen of what amateur photography could accomplish in those days.

'It can't be Septimus?' gasped Rosetta, snatching it up.

Mrs. Lovibond answered gently.

'He wished you to see it.'

The two women gazed hungrily at a man seated in a wicker-chair. He looked terribly ill, wasted to a shadow, and the lower part of his face, the strong chin and firm lips, was completely hidden by a beard, grown, no doubt, to hide a scar. A stout smiling fellow stood beside him—probably the doctor—and a youthful native was in attendance.

'I don't care how he looks,' said Rosetta defiantly.

But even then in her heart she knew that this was not true. The shock of seeing him so changed had been appalling, the more so because she realised that henceforward she would always see him as he was, not as he used to be. To prevent herself from bursting into unavailing sobs, she said fiercely:

'How I hate that fat smiling man!'

'Septimus tells me that the fat smiling man is raising him from the dead.'

Rosetta kissed the photograph, and laid it face down upon the table.

'I pray that I may never see it again.'

The mother knew that the *coup de grâce* had been given.

The winter months passed slowly. Long before the March

winds had ceased to blow the Sisters became anxious about 'the child.' Behind her back, they discussed interminably her fading colour, her listlessness, her lack of appetite, which they tried ineffectually to tempt with dainty dishes. Not even to each other did they mention the name of Septimus. The blinds between him and them remained down. Dr. Pogany fell back upon the last resource of baffled family practitioners. He prescribed a change of air. Prudence spoke tentatively of letting the Dower House and spending a year in Italy. Rosetta, however, refused almost angrily to leave Charminster, knowing that the letting of their home would be misery to the Sisters.

'I shall be all right in the spring,' she declared.

At the end of March, the Mauleverers returned to England; and within a week a letter arrived from the Head of the Family, enclosing a cheque for 250*l*. The delight of the two ladies withered protest before it left Rosetta's lips, but she was unable to feign an adequate enthusiasm. Jaqueline said to Prudence:

'I thought she would jump out of her skin with delight. Upon my word, I believe that the child would prefer to stay at home, if we left the matter to her.'

'She is below par,' said Prudence solemnly. 'There is nothing else the matter with her—absolutely nothing.'

'I quite agree,' Jaqueline hastened to add.

The visit to Madame Prune exercised a tonic effect. Madame was emphatic in declaring that Mademoiselle was more lovely than ever. In a sense this was true. Rosetta's face had gained distinction and charm.

'Mademoiselle is more of the lily and less of the rose: is it not so?'

Jaqueline replied: 'Quite, quite; and your frocks, Madame, will put the colour back into those white cheeks.'

'Perfectly. It is a privilege to do good in that way.'

In the afternoon the ladies visited the Zoological Gardens, where an exciting incident happened. They were in the old Lion House, which used to contain two handsome leopards. Prudence remarked with astonishment that a man was standing close to the leopards' cage, and then the three ladies perceived that he had thrust his arm through the bars, and was scratching the leopard's head. They could hear the great beast purring contentedly.

'How extremely reckless!' Prudence exclaimed.

'He must be a privileged person,' said Rosetta.

'We should not be allowed in there,' murmured Jaqueline.

The man withdrew his arm, and turned.

'It's Cæsar!' exclaimed Rosetta.

'Who?'

'Sir Rodney Brough.'

As she spoke, Sir Rodney recognised her, after a quick, penetrating glance. He raised his hat, and approached.

'I'm so glad to see you again,' he said, holding out his hand.

Rosetta introduced the Sisters, and Jaqueline, fascinated by the hand that ventured to caress wild beasts, said shyly:

'I am distressed, Sir Rodney, that you should imperil a life so valuable as yours.'

His grim face relaxed.

'I only risked a hand. That leopard belonged to me.'

'Would it let me stroke it?' asked Rosetta.

'You have courage.'

'If you told me it was quite safe, I should have no fear.'

He bowed, in a somewhat old-fashioned manner which pleased the Sisters mightily, but he said slowly: 'It would not be safe. Are you staying in town?'

'For two days only. I am spending the season with my cousins.'

'Then we shall meet soon.'

'I hope you will have something exciting to tell me.'

Quite unconsciously, she had assumed the gay manner which had so attracted him two years before. Her eyes sparkled, a dimple showed in her cheek.

'Exciting? I shall try to be prepared. Why do you like excitement?'

'Because I've had so little of it. The first thrill I've enjoyed for three months was when I saw your arm thrust through those bars.'

'You had recognised me?'

'Not then.'

He laughed, and took leave of the ladies, who watched him walk away with interested eyes. A keeper joined the great man, standing hat in hand before him.

'An impressive personality,' said Prudence.



'His eyes are wild,' remarked Jaqueline.

'So they are,' said Rosetta. 'It's odd, but I never realised that till you said so. They are wild. They look as if they had seen strange sights; and so they have. He frightens most people, but he never frightened me. Mauleverer hardly dared to speak to him, but I used to stroke his head.'

'Good gracious!'

'Figuratively, of course. I'm glad that he's at home again.'

'He doesn't look quite at home, dear,' said Jaqueline.

'Jaqueline, you've scored again. He told me that he never felt at ease in a tall hat. Wouldn't he make a magnificent Red Indian—a Sioux chief? Can't you see him in feathers, brandishing a tomahawk?'

'No, indeed,' Jaqueline answered. 'I prefer him in a frock coat.' Then she perpetrated a mild joke: 'Perhaps he does feel at home amongst the lions.'

*(To be continued.)*



## AT THE SIGN OF THE PLOUGH.

WITH this number of the Magazine is given the tenth of a series of 'Examination Papers' on the works of famous authors, being Mr. C. L. Graves' questions on Mr. Rudyard Kipling's Works. For the best set of answers to this Paper the Editor offers a prize of

Two Guineas. The name of the Prizewinner will be announced in the November number of the Magazine, together with the correct answers to the questions.

### PAPER IX.

Boswell's 'Life of Johnson' and 'Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides.'

By CANON BEECHING.

1. Where was Dr. Johnson once drowned? *Answer* : In the newspapers.
2. With what hypothetical end in view did Dr. Johnson conceive the necessity of turning himself into a reptile? *Answer* : To become a botanist.
3. What was, in Dr. Johnson's opinion, the best material for women's dresses, and why? *Answer* : Linen detects its own dirtiness.
4. Who once offered the Doctor a shilling? *Answer* : A gentlewoman, supposing him the watchman.
5. What subject did Dr. Johnson refuse to learn? *Answer* : The Scottish dialect.
6. A well-known dramatic author is spoken of, who anticipated the methods of Mr. Pelissier. In what respect? *Answer* : He lived upon potted stories.
7. To what social observance would Johnson not seem retrograde, 'for ten pounds'? *Answer* : Court mourning at the theatre.
8. What was Boswell bidden to write down in the first leaf of his pocket-book? *Answer* : Johnson's regard for him.
9. 'You have not travelled over my mind, I promise you.' To whom was this said? *Answer* : Goldsmith.
10. In whose house did a gentleman display a nice trait of character by whistling? *Answer* : The Duke of Argyll's.
11. What did Johnson lose during his tour to the Hebrides? *Answer* : His spurs and oak staff.
12. Fill up the blanks in the following :
  - (a) 'I never heard — make a good joke in my life.'
  - (b) ' — Sir, is a good thing to sit by.'
  - (c) 'If you call a dog — I shall love him.'
  - (d) ' — Sir, is the most invulnerable man I know.'

*Answers* : (a) Burke. (b) Clive. (c) Hervey. (d) Sir Joshua Reynolds.

The Johnson Paper has produced the closest competition. A mere shade separates the winners from the next two competitors—another shade these from a baker's dozen more. Thus the answer to No. 3 'vegetable substances' and 'for cleanliness' is not so good as that given above. In No. 5 'The Gentle Shepherd' is not adequate, albeit the reference of Boswell's pronoun is not grammatically free from ambiguity, and in No. 7 the reference to the theatre as well as to court mourning seems indispensable.

Three competitors tie for first place, and in the special circumstances a prize of One Guinea has been awarded to each, viz.:—Miss Edith Cowell, Dewsmead, Bishop's Stortford; P. E. Herrick, Esq., 38 Westbourne Road, Forest Hill, S.E.; and Francis J. Newstead, Esq., Scotland Lane, Horsforth, Leeds. Proxime accesserunt: J. H. Morton, Esq., Cambuslang, and Walter Gordon, Esq., Oxford.

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### PAPER X.

On the Works of Mr. Rudyard Kipling.

By C. L. GRAVES.

1. Translate *minauderie* into the Mulvaneyan dialect.
2. Who wouldn't allow her father to talk of 'the devil's colours'?
3. Whose husband had his face slapped 'for a bone-idle beggar'?
4. What sort of champagne was drunk by the horse-artillery in Egypt?
5. Who was the 'silvery ghost' that 'rose bolt upright and sighed a weird whistling sigh'?
6. To what was the landing of a twelve-pound salmon as nothing in comparison?
7. Who said 'it is not good to look at death with a clear eye'?
8. Who was 'the Gadarene swine'?
9. Who never gets into the middle of the room?
10. What is 'full of nickel-plated sentiments guaranteed to improve the mind'?
11. Whose deaths were triple-headed?
12. What is the worst rhyme in Mr. Kipling's poems?

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Competitors must observe the following Rules:

1. Each question must be answered in not more than six words.
2. All replies must be sent in on the printed and perforated form supplied with the Magazine. This form should be folded and sealed, and must be in the hands of the Editor not later than the first post on Saturday, October 7, 1911.
3. No correspondence can be undertaken by the Editor, whose decision is final.

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